

No. 1

Tuesday

First Session

13th December, 2011

Ninth Parliament

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

ADVANCE COPY

OFFICIAL REPORT

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THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

**PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE FIRST 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.
FIRST SITTING 13TH DECEMBER 2011**

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

The Honourable House of Assembly met at 9:10 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 Marriaqua

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

Dr. the Honourable Godwin Friday

Member for Northern Grenadines

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

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY 13TH DECEMBER, 2011

PRAYERS

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

PROCLAMATION BY THE GOVERNOR GENERAL

WHEREAS by subsection 1 of section 47 of the Constitution of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines CAP 10 of the Revised Laws of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines 2009 Edition:

“It is provided that each session of Parliament shall be held at such place within Saint Vincent and the Grenadines shall begin at such time as the Governor General shall appoint by proclamation;”

AND WHEREAS it is expedient that the session of the said parliament shall be held at the Court House Kingstown and shall begin on the 13th day of December, 2011 at 9 o'clock in the forenoon. Now, therefore, I Sir Frederick Nathaniel Ballantyne, GCMG, Governor General of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines do hereby appoint the said Court House as a place of the said session shall be held on Tuesday the 13th day of December, 2011 at 9 o'clock in the forenoon as a time at which the said session shall begin. Given under my hand and the public seal of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, this 28th day of November, 2011 and in the sixtieth year of her reign of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the Second. God Save the Queen.

OBITUARIES

HONOURABLE CECIL MCKIE: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to offer condolences to the family of the late Eardley Ishmael Adams of Belair. Eardley was indeed a family man, very often you would see Eardley and his loving wife walking through Kingstown and the village of Belair, probably the most elderly couple in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines who traverse the streets so often, he was indeed a community man as well, but nationally he would have been known as the “banjo man” because he was very much involved in music in the National String Band throughout the streets in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines down in the Grenadines as well. Indeed Eardley not only provided music for locals here on mainland here in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines but he was well known by the thousands of tourists that would have come to our shores and indeed whenever they would come here they would ask for the “banjo man” when the National String Band provided music at the Cruiseship Berth or throughout the streets of Kingstown. We would also miss him sincerely because he would have been very much part of the Christmas set up here on the streets in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Once again on behalf of the Parliament Members on this side, we extend condolences to Eardley Ishmael “Banjo Man” Adams on his passing, much obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, Member for East Kingstown.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Mr Speaker, I wish to offer condolences to the members of the family of Owen Lewis of Georgetown, who has been living in the United States and Canada for a very long time and was buried here earlier this week at the age of 96 years. Those of us who had the opportunity to study in Canada are well aware of Owens’s contribution for our general well-being as young students going particularly to Montreal in those days; and I vividly remember his concerns and those of us who came to Canada in those days would be assisted in settling in Montreal at that time. Owen has or I should say had a very large family and that was evident at his funeral, but I recall his deep interest in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the well-being of our people. He hampered I would say with politics for a while at the local level in Georgetown where he was born and indeed he has left a mark, he was the father of Cleve Lewis of...who has business here in Kingstown C&R Enterprises and a number others and I think twenty-nine children in all according to what I saw on the program, fifty-nine grandchildren and forty great-grandchildren, I counted them myself on the program, but Owen really was a committed Vincentian and he did what he could to assist his people.

I want to recognise also, Mr. Speaker, the passing of the King as everyone knows as “Ells” whose life...Dental Technician whose life was cut short by someone who has now been dealt with by the police. He has left a very young family, I met four of his a few days ago 9, 7, 4 and one just about 3 months and I sympathise with them deeply because their future is going to be a difficult one with the absence of a father. How many people in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines have been touched by his passing...in the manner of his passing and am sure that many of us in this House indeed all of us in this House are deeply concerned about the way he lost his life here in our country. I want to say to the family, I offer them on behalf of those of us on this side of the House our deepest condolences on the passing of a husband and a father, much obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Prime Minister

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to join with the Honourable Minister of Health on the condolences to the family of Banjo Man Adams an important cultural figure and also with the Honourable Leader of the Opposition in respect of the passing of Owen Lewis and the tragic death of Ewart “Ells” King.

Mr. Speaker, I endorsed everything that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition said in relation to both of these two men. I knew Owen Lewis he has... he had a house just across the gutter from where I lived in Frenches and from time to time we would speak and he is a good human being a good Vincentian, someone who took great interest in our country and his people, he has had a very good life, long life played a fantastic innings and I want to say to his family, immediate family and friends that this is one...this is a life in which we would celebrate joyously fantastic.

Mr. Speaker, I knew Ewart “Ells” King, I frequently converse with him and his murder was...his death shocked me. I was overseas at the time of his killing and the fear which comes into one where you...you are in your home, you not troubling anybody, people break your house and come in to kill you, it is a terrifying thing and it is a kind of murder, a kind of a killing which sends shockwaves through people...you know every death is... every killing is one killing too many but we are human beings and there are some which catch us more, the manner of his death I have been advised by the police that the individual who they reasonably

believed who have been involved in it, the killing from the stand point that the firearm which is owned by Ells was retrieved from the van in which he was travelling that is to say the escaped prisoner who is now dead also, the police, naturally, are carrying out further investigation because they do not close an investigation on one piece of evidence.

I want to commend the police on their work thus far; I am not making any comments beyond commending them on the gathering off intelligence and the way in which they are pursuing this matter, so I keep my comments within that narrow compass because there would be, naturally, the Coroner's Inquest into the death of both Ells and also the deceased prisoner and the evidence would be presented clearly, the Jury; if there is anybody else involved in the killing of Ells obviously the matter would not just be a Coroner's Inquest there would be another judicial proceeding, so there is much information still for us to know publicly but this was a dastardly crime, murder of an innocent man in his home. Ells made an immense contribution to this country, I really feel for his family, mean at any stage, when someone is cut down like this you feel for the family but with a young family especially its...we are a small community and we all have to reach out and to show that there is good in us as a people. There are some evil ones in our midst but we have to show that there is good among our people, all of us and we have to do whatever is called for to ensure that Ells and his family...Ells' family is not in any way disadvantaged or endure undue hardship am quite sure that the family would gather strength from the immense achievements of Ells. We sincerely convey condolences not for this side of the House, but I think I speak for the entire country, condolences to the family, immediate family, the extended family and friend, much obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I would also like to express deepest condolences to the family of Ells. I know Ells or knew Ells and I know his family quiet well, all members of his family, i.e. which includes his mother and even his father who has deceased, sisters, brothers etc. so having myself being born in Calliaqua from which Ells came and I have seen him in his various developments in life and I can even remember my own little encounter with him. I was driving along the Sharpes Street area and this person was behind me blowing the horn incessantly and I could not understand why he is doing that only to look back in the rear view mirror to see the person killing himself with laugh and I know that was the kind of character Ells was; a guy who you cannot afford to be mad with for any long time and I was rather saddened when I got that news about 3 o'clock in the morning that he was killed I think it is really a terrible thing and I know the pains and the suffering that the family's enduring at this

particular time and I wish to convey my deepest regards to them and trust that they would take faith and that they would understand it is a matter of which they themselves had no control and all things are in God's hand. I understand the funeral would be on Friday at St. Paul's Anglican Church at Calliaqua and I am sure that while...once we dispense with these estimates am sure we would attend that funeral. Again thank you very much.

CONGRATULATORY REMARKS

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Prime Minister

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, very briefly I would like to offer congratulations to Prime Minister Kenny Anthony of St. Lucia for his return to office after an absence of 5 years and to the St. Lucia Labour Party on their recent Election Day victory. I would like to congratulate the people of St. Lucia for yet again in the finest traditions; democratic traditions, run free and fair elections. This is a tradition in our parts and long may it so continue.

Mr. Speaker at the same time I want to say that Stephenson King, now Opposition Leader ran very competitive elections with his United Workers Party and it is not because he has lost he must be demonized from my association with him he is a good and decent man. I also would say for the record as well known that Kenny Anthony is my very good friend and our parties are fraternal parties. I have been in conversations both with Dr. Anthony and Mr. Stephenson King, in fact Stephenson telephoned me before I got unto him to thank me for some kind words which I said about him following his party's defeat, because there is a tendency in these parts when someone loses elections it is as though it is the end of the world, we gotta get pass that. They are good human beings who run elections who offer themselves for elections, sometimes you win, sometimes you lose it is the nature of democracy, but it does not mean that the person who loses is a devil and the person who wins is by virtue of his victory, virtuous and on the other hand those who lose must not produce those are victorious and ascribe all sorts of names and intentions to them and vice versa, we, we, we...as I get older I appreciate more and more this wonderful gift which we have called choosing of individuals to govern. There are some who take it for granted we are not too and in that light I congratulate the people of St. Lucia, am obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Central Kingstown.

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, can I join with the Honourable Prime Minister and I do so on behalf of those on this side of the House that would be the Leader of the Opposition to extend our own congratulations to Kenny Anthony in his victory in St. Lucia even as he commiserates with our brother party; I don't understand when they say sister party...brother party. I say even we stay with our brother party...I know you not going to hear me ah nah you are on the road to Damascus [Laughter] and I will see your comments- to which I identify- you know, but it is good to hear the Prime Minister as he utter the words this morning because the son is in our club and we are here today and there tomorrow, in fact I believe in the course of the day we might hear very much about today the 13th of December as well that is why it have been postponed because it also a very momentous day for very many people but I leave those congratulations until others congratulate, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker, fundamentally this morning I want to comment on an event I attended about two Saturdays ago. It was an event by the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Cadet Force, hosted by Colonel Wright Lewis and his officers, on the occasion to award B-Tech Certificate to a number of outstanding Cadets and I think is the Caribbean Medal to Major Ferdinand. The Cadets were launching their 75th Anniversary as well and they had the presence of one member of the Cadet Force a Mr. Anderson, who had joined the movement in 1936. I understand the other living members ... I hope I have my history correct, who unfortunately could not be there. Now the Cadets have been around for 75 years, now I don't think anyone would want to challenge them as being the successful youth organisation in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and they have grown tremendously. I am familiar with about 45 years of that history, having joined in that organisation in 66 myself and to be Commandant for about 15 years, but I will the event that they hosted two weeks ago even except for when female Cadets became a member of that organisation in 1975 is the proudest moment I have ever been around the Cadet movement and they deserve every commendation, all 950 of them who now constitute the Cadet Force.

You know Mr. Speaker, the Commissioner of Police who described himself, and we do so from time to time and he is my very good friend made an observation on that Saturday, that he was certain the event would not make the front page or the back page of the weekly newspapers, so said so done; but if you ask me in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines during that week and even the competing weeks, it has been one of the most significant achievements of our young people

of this country yet it was hidden somewhere in the centre pages of some of the newspapers. Now our media simply have to get their act correct, because if we are to be the role models, if we are to lift up our young people to identify the good and get a sense of balance when we have these demonstrations we should properly position place and I think it is regrettable that event did not get the prominence that it deserves. I simply want to recognise this event again for those people who do not know the awards-the B-Tech is an examination put in place by...in the United Kingdom by two universities, including CK and Gail's, so which is in fact a university entry qualification and there are members of the Cadet Force who have gone on to get First degrees and in the case of Colonel Lewis I believe, he mastered a degree in Strategic Management and Planning from a very reputable organisation and many of those Cadets can now work in the British Army on the basis of their qualifications and into British universities and am sure to the University of the West Indies itself, and it is in fact the way to go and we need to do all that is within our powers to ensure the longevity of that organisation. The Prime Minister, I know the Estimates are already sealed but you can find creative ways. I think the usual \$120,000 might be voted there for them, for 950 of them, they are still looking for their headquarters and I know that is in your heart somewhere and I trust in the course of the year-the 75th year, we could find that little increment to make the year the most memorable and deserving one for that movement. Much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for East St. George.

HONOURABLE CLAYTON BURGIN: Mr. Speaker, I know when I stand they think it is another centenarian but... [Laughter] the other two persons are two years away from that so. [Interjection] Yes Mr. Prime Minister...well the member for Central Kingstown, Mr. Speaker, alluded to today's date the 13th of December is a very significant date in the calendar in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, it was on this date, one year ago that the Unity Labour Party was returned to office to govern this country [applaud] in the third term...it is the first anniversary in the third term and Mr. Speaker when we... in these parts you are asked to govern for five years when you win an election and we were told that we only had six months, so it is significant that we have gone beyond the six months and we now celebrating the first anniversary [applause] and I know that it is only one person who will decide whether we go for the five years and we have been doing so for the past...from since 2001 so I hope that the trend continues.

So Mr. Speaker, this Government have achieved a lot and while I am congratulating I want to especially mention the General Secretary, Senator Julian Francis, who was able to defeat an organisation that boasts a record worldwide that they have never lost an election, so Minister Francis congratulation and let me thank the people of St. Vincent, the concerned citizen of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines who voted for the Unity labour Party once again. So Mr. Speaker, congratulations are in order for the Unity labour Party and this Government and may we so long remain the government of this country. Thank you very much.

HONOURABLE ST.CLAIR LEACOCK: I just, in my congratulations, I believe it is the same for the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition as well, we forgot to mention that there is also election in Guyana as well and there is a new President there Ramotar and sure the House wants to identify with his ascendancy to that high office as well.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable member for South Windward.

HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise as Minister of Sport to congratulate the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Cricket Association for hosting their Cricket Awards two Saturdays ago, but more importantly Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to congratulate Ms. Juliano Nero, woman cricketer from the Magum Village, in the North Windward Constituency for being the first Vincentian to have ever scored a century in International Cricket [applause].

Mr. Speaker I think that a significant milestone, it is something that our young people, our young women, our young boys can emulate, she has done us very proud and as the Minister I am indeed very happy for her and continue to wish her all the success. I also want to congratulate the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines team for winning the Windward Island Tournament which was recently held also [applause].

Mr. Speaker, as we continue to develop...as we continue to develop the areas of sporting discipline here in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, I want to encourage all of us to support the organisations and do whatever we can to help them to move on to the next level. Am much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable member for North Windward.

HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL: Mr. Speaker, I want to associate myself with the comments made by the Honourable Minister and the Representative for the Constituency of South Windward, but before I do that, Mr. Speaker, I want to apologise for my lateness here this morning that is so Mr. Speaker, because in all my years of driving I had one of the most unfortunate circumstances this morning. For those of us who know Sandy Bay, driving from Sandy bay when you get into Overland as you pass the junction at Overland heading to the Pompey's residence I met a vehicle P9697, a Suzuki driving at around 40-45 km per hour so I head down into the river over unto the other side where the cell site is for Digicel. The road is clear now because a lot of road work has been going on and the road is clear, so I tooted my horn to pass the vehicle, unfortunately the vehicle pulled on the right side of the road, I actually thought it was someone from the US or so who is driving but I... you know I tooted my horn the vehicle came over on the right side of the road. Well I went up and I turned the corner, the immediate corner and then there is a straight road of around 2 or 500 feet, again I tooted my horn to pass, only to find that the vehicle again pulled on the right side of the road almost touch my vehicle, then I realised this has to be a wilful act. I immediately called the Georgetown Police because I wanted to know who was the driver and the Georgetown Police stopped the vehicle, a vehicle driven by Franklyn Evans from Calliaqua, I do not know the gentleman but he is from Calliaqua and he had with him a passenger Helen Bowens from Owia, but I know Helen so; therefore I immediately determine what was happening, so the police indicated to him because of course that he did not actually touch my vehicle, then he did not commit any crime so therefore it is one can move on; but I really want to know who was driving the vehicle because it is the most unfortunate circumstance I ever had since I am driving on the road; and so as I say I do not know who is Franklyn Evans but he is from Calliaqua and so I would try to find out much more of who he is.

But Mr. Speaker, I want to associate myself with the comments with Juliana Nero better known as Barbra. Barbra has come from humble beginnings and Barbra has been an outstanding young lady from the community of Sandy Bay. They are of poor family and when one could rise to such high levels of course, such individuals should be commended and so I want to wish her well [applause], I am very happy for her and I wish that you would continue in that way, am much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Prime Minister

DR. HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Just preview indulgence, the elections which took place in Guyana we must acknowledge the rise to Presidency of Donald Ramotar and for the PPP for gaining the majority, the highest number of seats in the Parliament but for the joint Opposition in having the Parliamentary majority between the PNC and the AFC the Alliance of Change.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to join with the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown in his congratulations for the Cadets and I just want to assure him that it is the public policy of the Government to have its goal is to have every single child who is in school in a disciplined organisation, whether it's the Primary school, the Scouts and Cubs and Girl Guides and for the Cadets in the Secondary school and that we have increased the number of Cadets over the last 11 years by some 850, it is phenomenal achievement and I just want to say that the Member for Central Kingstown is quite correct in this and in so far as the Headquarters are concerned we are working assiduously towards the strengthening of the institutional capacity of the Cadets and also the quarters in which they meet and from which they do their work.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Senator Baptiste, Honourable Senator Baptiste

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to give congratulations to young Ms. River Providence, former GHS student who we all know from the media was named the most outstanding student from the Humanities Department for the 2011 CXC Results, I think she made our nation proud, she received her award recently and I would just like to give warm congratulations to her and her family.

CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES

The Minutes of the sitting held on 22nd and the 25th of November 2011, copies of which had been previously circulated were taken as read and confirmed without amendments.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Central Kingstown

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: Mr Speaker before the seconding for the Minutes takes place, Mr. Speaker, I want to draw attention to page 19 of the Minutes of the 22nd Mr. Speaker, 1,2,3,4, the 5th paragraph, Mr. Speaker, and I raise it under the notion that it is...yes it is absolutely potent to be correct but I think it is also important that the subject matters in Minutes also should be factual and I had an occasion of that especially in the House, Mr. Speaker, asked of the Honourable Prime Minister a question on the Other Receipts of the Capitol Program and I recognise then and even more so now, Mr. Speaker, for it will become a matter of the moment as we debate the estimates that the information here may not have been accurate and I simply want to leave it open enough for the Prime Minister to perhaps correct himself on the records of the House in respect to Other Receipt of the estimates. I will leave it at that, Mr. Speaker, so that the door is open.

DR. HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Any issues which arise from that, arise from that.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: ...inform me that I...but we cannot make any amendments...this is what was said...so that issue can be taken up some other place some other time. All right.

HONOURABLE CLAYTON BURGIN: I have a correction on page 25...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Correction on page 25.

HONOURABLE CLAYTON BURGIN: Omission of correction I have dealt with paragraph "the Minister reply and visit out land on the 30th..." the month is not there...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Which one?

HONOURABLE CLAYTON BURGIN: So it is October, in the hurricane...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: 25

HONOURABLE CLAYTON BURGIN: Where the Minister replied...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: ... our land on the 30th ...

HONOURABLE CLAYTON BURGIN: Yea visit our land on the 30th 2010. October it is...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: 30th October, 2010.

HONOURABLE CLAYTON BURGIN: ...and the third line...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Of the last paragraph

HONOURABLE CLAYTON BURGIN: Yes of the last paragraph...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: ok

HONOURABLE CLAYTON BURGIN: ...construction methods were the principle cause of ...principal...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: ok alright.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Uhm...no! No! No!

REPORTS FROM SELECT COMMITTEES

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Prime Minister

DR. HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, the Finance Committee meeting was held yesterday and the Minutes are here, I lay them on this table.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM ESUTACE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to lay before, the Public Accounts Committee Report, this has to be read in conjunction with the Minutes which already have been circulated.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Alright.

PETITIONS

HONOURABLE MAXWELL CHARLES: Honourable Members, I wish to lay the following petitions on behalf of the Church Organisations:

1. The humble petition of the Trustees of the Bequia Community Church.
2. The humble petition of the Trustees of the Christian Pilgrim Fellowship.
3. The humble petition of the Trustees of the Prayer and Faith Assembly.
4. The humble petition of the Trustees of the Maranatha Baptist Church.
5. The humble petition of the Trustees of the St. Joseph Spiritual Baptist Church.
6. The humble petition of the Trustees of the Harvest Bible Chapel.
7. The humble petition of the Trustees of the Berean Baptist Church.

Much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

PAPERS

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Prime Minister

DR. HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I formally lay on the table of this Honourable House the Estimates of Expenditure Revenue...Revenue and Expenditure for the year 2012 with projections for 2013 and 2014. These Estimates have been circulated.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

1. 2012 Estimates of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

DR. HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move on the Standing Order 12(5), that the proceedings of today's sitting be exempted from the provisions of the Standing Order.

Question put and agreed to.

DR. HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move the motion on the Order Paper which stands in my name, reads as follows:

WHEREAS Section 70 (1) of the Constitution of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines provides that the Minister for the time being responsible for finance shall cause to be prepared and laid before the House of Assembly before, or not later than thirty days after, the commencement of each financial year estimates of the revenues and expenditure of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for the financial year;

AND WHEREAS Section 70 (2) of the Constitution provides for the approval of the estimates of expenditure by the House;

AND WHEREAS the Government had additionally decided to prepare estimates on triennial basis.

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable House of Assembly do adopt the Estimates for the financial year ending 31st December, 2012.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Honourable House note the projections for the financial years ending 31st December, 2013 and 31st December, 2014.

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

Resolution moved and adopted

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Before I ask for any further debate or any debate on this motion, permit me to mention that... I was informed that the Honourable Member for West Kingstown is out of state and will not be present here today [interjection] hello? For medical reasons, I just want to mention that because I did not remember.

DR. HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the 2012 fiscal year \$793,911,053.00. This represents a marginal increase of 0.9% or \$7.42 million over the approved budget for 2011. A small increase in next year's budget...total budget arises from a 4.7 increase in planned capital spending, while the recurrent budget...expenditure budget remains relatively stable registering a marginal decline of 0.1% or just under a million dollars at \$820,000.00. The budget for 2012 is made up as follows: Recurrent Expenditure plus Amortization and Sinking Fund Contributions, \$528,669,213.00; and Capital Expenditure of \$184,915,470.00. This is expenditure financed by Current Revenue of \$507,334,600.00 and Capital Receipts totalling \$286,576,453.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to the details of some of the new initiatives in these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure and I am not addressing those on the recurrent side at this moment.

Mr. Speaker, one would find two new programs included in the estimates and additionally a significant sum on another item. The first of the two new programs is within the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, the matter relating to Financial Sector Supervision and Regulatory Program into which International Financial Services Authority and the Supervisory and Regulatory Division have been subsumed. Honourable Members would recall that in the...a few weeks ago in this Honourable House we passed the Financial Services Authority Act, there is now provisions made for that and one would see at a subvention of \$1.6 million to fund the operations of the Financial Services Authority and the details are found at pages 160 and 161.

The second program...new program in the recurrent estimates would be found at pages 544 and 545 in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Consumers Affairs, where we have budgeted to establish an Embassy in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Mr. Speaker, Venezuela is a very important partner for the Government in trade and economic matters and we will be in 2012 doing even more serious work with Venezuela, particularly on the trading dimension of the Petro Caribe agreement where we intend to sell agricultural produce, in fact a series of items have already been identified and the prices, we are awaiting the quantities required for galvanise sheets and also windows and doors and we also looking at the trade in services with tourism and even to sell through the Community College the service for the teaching of the English language and we are, Mr. Speaker, in these matters we need someone on the ground in Caracas. If I may so, Mr. Speaker, the benefits we get from the financing arrangements of Petro Caribe on the fuel-good-many, many times over pay for an embassy; I should point out that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has consented to provide office space and we are for a period of time and we are working at the moment on the modalities, hopefully we can get this embassy established in the first half of next year.

Mr. Speaker the Banana Service Unit in the Ministry of Agriculture, one would notice that there is a total including...a total which includes \$3.44 million for materials and supplies, operating and maintenance and training to undertake the Black Sigatoka eradication campaign. Honourable Members would find the details at page 414.

There are several new staff positions, Mr. Speaker, in this budget, and if I may say, Mr. Speaker, this budget is fashioned and I will speak... these estimates...and I will speak much more about this in January when the debate commences on January 9th, God willing on the Appropriation Bill of the framework and we know the international situation, we know the regional, we know the question of the natural disasters and one would find in these estimates in the context of the work which we have been doing, a re-balancing of certain staff position and as I go along I shall try to explain them. If I may say this, Mr. Speaker, in the area...we see new staff positions particularly in the area of Health, Wellness and the Environment and in Education.

Mr. Speaker, in the Ministry of Health and the Environment, the Nutrition Unit has been strengthened to combat the rise in trend in chronic Non-Communicable Diseases through better nutritional management. I want to say this, we have done a great deal of work in Education, we have done a lot of work in public health and we know that we have... the training of our people but we have to make our people live healthier lives or try to set the framework, plus it is an individual responsibility but we have to set the framework so that the persons in whom we are investing so much money that they should live healthier lives, that they should live longer and hopefully to be more productive and we know that the main killers are Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases, Cardiac problems, Diabetes, Hypertension, essentially dietary and lifestyle diseases. We have to address this in an important policy manner.

Mr. Speaker, staff positions have been reviewed and posts...new posts established to create the Office of the Nutrition Coordinator, Community Nutrition and Institutional Dietetics as follows; 1 Chief Nutritionist, 1 Senior Nutritionist and 3 dieticians. You can see the details Honourable Members, Mr Speaker, at page 481 of the estimates. At the Milton Cato Hospital, we have to deliver in a more efficacious manner primary health care we have to do better than we have been doing, we have been doing pretty good but we have to do better and even in these challenging economic times we have to find the resources to strengthen the medical staff and we having three additional doctors at the level of Registrar at the hospital. This brings the number of Registrars at the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital to fourteen. We are going to have other increases such as an Artisan and 2 Male Attendants.

Mr. Speaker, Mental Health in which we have been doing some reforms and under...on the capital side where we have a lot put to health, we going to do some reconstruction work at the Mental Health Centre. We are going to strengthen the staff and when it comes to the capital side

I would explain that. So we are going to have 1 Clinical Psychiatrist and another doctor who is a Registrar and in terms of Community Health which we have to continue strengthening there is an additional position for a Staff Nurse and one for an Assistant Radiographer.

Mr. Speaker, the Estimates as you would have seen as I am beginning to explain we have a thrust, a focus, there is a narratives, these are not just numbers which are plucked out of the sky they relate to an overrating...an overrating strategic framework so we would build human resources for the Ministry of Education, the Education Revolution, we have been doing a lot of work in Public Health and Health generally, now we are making head of in this period going forward a focal sector to lift the game so to speak in Health.

In the field of Education, Mr. Speaker, the Education Revolution has done immense work and during the course of the next few weeks and into January we would hear more details as to the work which we have done, public also is aware, but what we are going to do is that-and I have spoken on this within recent times and I...last year, Mr. Speaker, before the election, I wrote a very extensive paper, 76 pages in all, it is on the internet published in the newspaper, about taking education to the next level...lifting it to the next level; and there are several areas we have to...through which we have to lift it to the next level, having addressed the issue of access and some quality questions, physical facilities which are always on-going. We have to address the issue of improving qualitative outputs from the educational system, so we have to look at quality teaching and learning and we have to have teacher assessment and a developmental framework for all of this.

If I may say, Mr. Speaker, the last round of discussions on the Collective Bargain Agreement, I dropped in at the commencement of those discussions and addressed...raised precisely this question and the teachers are very engaged and the Teacher's Union am very happy to say are very engaged on this issue. So in order to address the qualitative outputs better and teacher assessment and a developmental framework in this regard, there are a number of posts which would assist, so in the Estimates you would find 3 Education Officers, 3 Education Officers 3, 3 of them and we have 3 Senior Education Officers.

Mr. Speaker, what we did is some re-balancing and some re-configuration. There are 4 posts of Education Officers 1 which the Ministry of Education...because of the change in landscape in

education agreed to give up in return for these 6 posts and in addition we have to strengthen project planning and implementation capacity and it's been enhanced...that area has been enhanced by 1 Senior Projects Officer and 1 Projects Officer 1.

The Recurrent Estimates

The 2012 Recurrent Estimates has a fiscal current account deficit of \$21.3 million, this figure is 21.8% below the budgeted deficit for this year 2011. The improvement in the budgeted deficit has been achieved through prudent budgetary measures.

The estimated current revenue, Mr. Speaker, for 2012 is \$507.3 million. This represents a modest increase of 0.5% over the budgeted revenue for 2011; however, when compared to the revised revenue budget for the current year of \$463.3 million, the 2012 revenue budget is expected to increase by 8.7%.

Mr. Speaker, you can see all these details, Honourable Members, can see all these details in the summaries, before we get into the details in the estimates. In 2012, Tax Revenue will continue to be the largest contributed to consolidated fund yielding \$471.2 million in collection or 4.7% over the budget for 2011. Over the years revenue from taxes has increased in relative importance in public...to the public purse, in 2005 tax revenue has budgeted to account for 89.4% of total revenue, in 2012 it is expected to account for 93% of the revenues. Non-tax revenue on the other hand continues to fall as a share of current revenue; collections from this source are expected to generate \$36.1 million in 2012.

Mr. Speaker, we are expecting this year, modest economic growth of about 2% the year sorry...the year 2012 and we are expecting to see improvements in tax administration. Taxes and incomes and profits are expected to recover in 2012; in 2011 actual collections from this category of taxes are projected to be \$112.3 million, while the budgeted sum for 2012 amounts to \$123 million or 9.5% over the revised estimate. The growth in revenue from income taxes is expected to come from increase taking from corporations and individuals; taxes on property, is projected to bring in \$6.2 million in revenue. A performance is this tax which has not been performing very well for a number of reasons is expected to be enhanced as a result for some reforms that will take effect in 2012. A full detail of the design of this tax will be provided in my budgetary...my budget address on the 9th of January, 2012. In 2012, taxes on International

Trade, Mr. Speaker, may I just pause here to say this, I notice that there have been some discussions already on this issue of reforms on property taxes. The question of reforms on property taxes is a matter which has been on the agenda since the last administration and indeed the budget addresses of my Honourable friend who now holds the office of Leader of the Opposition, one would see evidence of this and...but we as always in anytime looking at reforms, some people go with some wilder things I just want to assure the public to just await the details of the reforms as I announce them in 2012 in my budget address.

In 2012, Mr. Speaker, taxes on International Trade will generate \$196.4 million up by 10.4% when compared with the 2011 revised budget for this tax. The Value Added tax, Import and Export excise duty are all expected to perform well in 2012. Taxes on domestic transactions, is expected to contribute \$115.8 million for the public revenue in 2012. The Value Added Tax and Stamp Duty will be the largest sources of revenue in this category of taxes.

In 2012, collections from licenses are expected to amount to \$29.7 million, an increase of 17% or \$4.3 million when compared revised 2011 budget for this group. Yachts, vehicle drivers, telecom and broadcasts licenses is estimated to contribute \$22.1 million or 72% revenue from this source. Revenue from non-tax sources will come principally from fees, fines and permits, which is expected to yield \$21.3 million in revenue in 2012, this figure accounts for 58.9% of the inflows from this category of revenue, for full details of current revenue estimates, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members are found on pages 1-13 of the 2012 estimates.

I address the issue now of Recurrent Expenditure. The total estimated Recurrent Expenditure plus Amortization and Sinking Fund contribution is \$608,995,583.00 a decline of 0.8% or as I said before of \$0.82 million compared with approved budget for 2011. The Recurrent Expenditure for 2012 is made up as follows: Current Expenditure, \$528.6 million; Amortization, \$74.3; Sinking Fund Contribution, \$6 million; Total Recurrent Expenditure \$608.9 million. Mr. Speaker, I just want to say this, I know sometime some people outside will say well why are you worrying about your Sinking Fund Contributions, I just want to say this, you know and people will say well if you looking for money, why don't you take it from there, some people are willing to do, problem with that; you would be breaking the terms of... on which you go to the market for bonds and if you want to pay them on a single bullet you are going to have some difficulties like what we are seeing happening in a country in the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union which I will not call the name but...so that prudence comes in a

number of detailed ways you now, she is a lovely lady- Prudence but Prudence, if you date Prudence alone you must date her but, if you date Prudence alone you do not get the totality of all the experiences from this enterprise has to enter the picture because you have to do things which are to assist not that you are Islamic but you have to...in this matter you have to be prudent and enterprising.

[Interjection]

Mr. Speaker, I make an analogy for the purposes of explaining something and my Honourable friend...my Honourable friend wants to [laughs] take it literally, I advise him not to [laughs]. The review of the main economic categories of the current expenditure, reveals that Wages & Salaries there increasing at 2.9%, Pensions & NIS by 2.4%, Goods & Services by 1% and Debt Service by half of a percentage point compared with the 2011 approved budget. On the other hand, the other transfers have been reduced by 9.2%, the summary of the recurrent expenditure budget by economic categories is as follows: Wages & Salaries \$250.6 million, Pensions & NIS \$47 million, I want Honourable Members to note that figure and I want that to sink in into the public's consciousness. Pensions & NIS for Governments employees \$47 million and it is rising, fast; Other Transfers \$103.4 million, Debt Service \$131.8 million, Goods & Services \$76.1 million given the total of \$608.9 million.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, the broad category Wages & Salary is made up as follows: Salaries, \$215.6 million; Allowances, \$17.1 million; Wages, \$17.9 million; a total of \$250.6 million.

Mr. Speaker, salaries are budgeted to increase by 2.7%, given the prevailing fiscal circumstances, no provisions have been made in the Estimates for 2012 for any increase in salaries for the public servants, what you going to have...the reasons you have an increase in salaries in the macro sense with 2.7 is because you have increments and you have...you have the annual increments and you have some new posts.

Mr. Speaker, on December 9th, last Friday, I had a meeting with the Trade Unions representing all the public sector workers and all of the unions, save and except the leadership of the Public Service Union, that is to say, the Teacher's Union, the Police Welfare Association, the CTAW, the National Workers Movement, they all said that they would...the 3% which would have been

paid in 2013 they will wait until June for us to review the situation again to see whether we can make the payments, that is to say the economic 2012...2012...June 2012 and the...and the...of course we would have discussions as whether there is going be any wages increase for 2012 when we reach that point in June, we are talking about 2011...uhm 3%.

The Public Service Union leadership said that they will consult their membership; the others felt that they had done enough work with their members to be able to give the assurances in the terms in which they did and I want to thank the unions for their responsibility in this regard. So by June 2012 therefore we will meet with the unions again to determine whether the fiscal economic situation would allow for the payment of this increase. Naturally we agreed with the unions that the payment of paid in 2012 would be made retroactively, of course, I want to repeat, the automatic increments paid to all public servants will be paid in 2012, this and the new staff positions that I referred to earlier, I re-emphasized account for the increase. There are of course some public servants who have reached their maximum and therefore do not have any increments, I should also make that point but most public servants would have would have increments.

In 2012, allowances are estimated to increase by \$600,000.00 when compared with the approved budget of 2011. Two ministries in the main account for this increase: they are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of National Security. As part of the budget to establish the Embassy of Venezuela, a sum of \$300,000.00 has been provided as allowances for it, in the other instance, as police officers become married, more of them, and have served the minimum number of years in the force, they become eligible for certain allowances, this is the main driver for the \$300,000.00 increase in allowances in the Ministry of National Security. Wages are expected to increase by 3.9% in 2012 when compared to the approved wages budget in 2011. The increase in wages which amounts to \$600,000.00 is accounted for by the ministries of Agriculture and Education. In Ministry of Agriculture we find that the wages have increased...are increasing by \$400,000.00 and in the Ministry of Education by \$100,000.00.

Retiring Benefits

In 2012, the amount provided to pay pensions to pay to retired Civil Servants and government's counterpart contribution to the NIS to the Civil Servants currently employed is \$47.1 million.

This figure is up by \$1.1 million or 2.4% over the approved budget in 2011, every year it is going, its more than doubled, since this government has been in office, it is increasing sharply.

This amount is comprised of pensions \$38.1 million and NIS contribution \$9 million giving you the total of \$47.1 million. As I have mentioned in the past debates on the estimates, this is one area of expenditure that requires reform and I will address this more comprehensively in my budget address in January, I know that this is a matter which the Leader of the Opposition and I share the analysis...share analysis whether we share the same view...whether we share the same view as to the type of reform that is a matter as the reforms unfolded but clearly this is a matter which requires reform, which requires redress. I want to say this, this is a problem which is present in countries all over the world, we see in Britain, in France, in the United States, happening in other parts of the Caribbean, Barbados, and so on and so forth. Now as I said before in...I don't have to address this problem now, I could leave for persons...for the year 2013, 2025 but that would not be a responsible thing to do and the country knows that I am never afraid of challenges, I analyse a problem, I see certain challenges, I look for ways in which we can move reform creatively without necessarily putting persons at a disadvantage and there are always ways for us to look to do things. The only persons who...the only organisms, the only animal which don't adopt and look creatively and change or those which were the type which we know in history are the dinosaurs and when they...and I repeat the point I made elsewhere, when the asteroid hit earth the dinosaurs did not adapt, they died out, they became extinct, the small mammals adapted some may not like the word evolved, they adapted, they changed with the outer environment, the climatic conditions and they survived and they thrived and in that regard I see myself as a small mammal. So I think this is an important way in which we must in a scientific mode address our problem, though it is sensitivity.

Transfer payments to Local, Regional and International organisations and individuals are estimated to be \$103.4 million. This is a growing sum, as you know transfers would include in entities which were formerly a part of the Central Government that is why that has grown, BRAGSA, the Tourism Authority, the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Community College, but even apart from those the transfer from Central Government, the Statutory Bodies, the Public Enterprises, there is still uhm...there is still increases in this...in the area of transfers but this budgeted figure nevertheless because we have to try and control it tightly is expected to decline by 9.2% relative to the 2011 budget. A summary of this expenditure under this item is

as follows; Grants & Contributions \$76.2 million, Training \$8.6 million...\$8.1 million, Social Welfare payments \$19.1 million amounting to \$103.4 million.

Mr. Speaker, I should point out that the category Social Welfare payments if you were to top up all the items in the budget you will see that there is a decline but that does not mean a decline in payments in Public Assistance Benefits, you would see the categories that would have had a decline because the Tomas Housing Rehabilitation is coming towards an end and we had 6.2 on that in this year and Farmers Income Support of \$3 million, those come under the broad category of Social Welfare payment, so I do not want it to be said that...that anybody to say that Public Assistance payments are going down, NO! That is not happening I'm talking...because we just increased those this year I am talking about of the wider frame of what you may call Public Assistance.

Training is estimated to increase by 3.5% or \$300,000.00. Mr. Speaker, I want to take a few minutes to address the issue about public debt and again Honourable Members would notice the prudence and enterprise in which I have been addressing many issues in the Estimates thus far and I come to this category again and you will see who would have been functioning. As at September 30th, 2012...2011 the total public debt amounted to \$1,221,697,550.00 in other words \$1.22 billion, I want to say this because I have seen everybody, well not everybody, I have seen a number of persons say the public debt is \$2 billion I do not know where they get the figure from and as you talk, or you listen on the radio people say is \$2 billion, I say but what do I do to have people simply look at the numbers properly. There are people who talk in an informed manner and do not look through these you know, there are people who talk in a presumably informed manner on radio and write in the newspapers, persons with University degrees writing letters they don't even look at these Estimates, I don't know how many of them have actually gone through the numbers of the public debt which are in the appendix and see them and compare them with previous years and so on and so forth. If you are going to comment, if you are trained, for heaven sake do not parade your degree or presumed training as though that gives you the authority. What gives you the authority is how you diligently address issues and that is all I ask and once we have the facts we can then diverge and address opinions and at least, please let us have the facts. So it is \$1.22 billion.

This figure at the 30th of September, 2011...somebody may say why use the 30th of September, the reason why you use the 30th of September in every estimate, in every part of the world

where you have the financial year January the 1st to December the 31st, you have the cut off period of the 30th of September, when you... within nine months, because you preparing the estimates and you want to give the Parliament what the figure is, so you compare those dates; if you want some further precision you then ask some other questions and then I can provide other information per say the last three months of the year. This figure is 0.7% lower than the total disbursed outstanding debt for the comparative period in 2010, in other words, the public debt for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines at the end of 20...September 2011 is almost 1% lower than the total disbursed outstanding debt for the comparative period in 2010; now that is a remarkable achievement in a period of real challenge and as I pointed out to the Finance Committee yesterday; and just in case people who were there and anyone else who were there felt that the Chairman is talking just so, I am very careful when I addressing institutions, does not mean that I may not make an error, but I said Director General is not...Finance & Planning is not it true that for the last three years we have not borrowed money at commercial rates, he said “yes Prime Minister.”

I have avoided borrowing commercially, I have to do things prudently and enterprisingly and we come down...the public debt is down 0.7%. The domestic debt which accounted...the domestic debt which amounted to \$491.35 million as at September 30th this year, fell by 14.9% or \$86.2 million when compared to the domestic debt for the same period in 2010, on the other hand, the external debt for the period under review stood at \$730.35 million, an increase of \$77.1 million or 11.8% when compared to the external debt as at September the 30th, 2010. Well having said that, there are some people would say “well aahhh you hear the external debt has gone up for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines?” they would not tell you that the internal debt has gone down and they would not tell you at what percentages either-14.9%.

The reduction in the domestic debt was due mainly to the following:

1. A sum of \$13.4 million was paid on Amortized bonds;
2. Public Sector overdraft balances were reduced by \$38.9 million and;
3. A total of \$20.2 million was repaid on loans.

So you would notice a significant amount of loan repayments have been made by this Government over the past year, contrary to a lot of things you hear. We however increased

Treasury bills by \$15 million, these are the ninety day Treasury bill and we put them in three transcripts and for this year and it is a sensible things to do, because for this year on the Regional Government Securities Market we have been getting under 4%. The market is speaking and saying we like how the Minister of Finance is handling the economy of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines even in these difficult circumstances.

Other OECS...other Eastern Caribbean Currency Union Countries is 6% they getting, is 6% they have to pay and every time we go to the market on our...for our Treasury bills we are oversubscribed substantially oversubscribed, so I have to make that point also, for Honourable Member would just look...am saying to you, Honourable Members, for this year, we have been getting under 4%, 3.9, 3.89 and so on, we had to pay on our Treasury Bills which is good money, obviously not as good as the 2% we get from the ALBA Bank Loan out of Venezuela, but you look at Spain which is the fourth largest economy in the Euro zone for this: for similar ninety day money, three months money, they have to pay in excess of 5%, 5^{1/2}% or thereabout, Italy was over 5% and when they Berlusconi fell, in the flush of the enthusiasm about Monti it just went a little bit under 5% here for the year and this is the market, this is not Ralph Gonsalves, this is the market which is speaking; And Payables, if Honourable Members would look, you would see payables increase by \$8.6 million. Now I want to say this that this morning I check to what the payables were so that I can bring Honourable Members up to date, the payables as of today amount to \$22 million of which less than \$6 million owed to the Private Sector, the rest of the money owed to Public Enterprises and International Bodies and Organisations distributed among them, but of course payables at any particular date, you would have to take the number, if that's the 9th, the 30th of September, but then I tell you what has happened over the last three months.

The main factors behind the movement of the external debt are as follows: the CDB loans increased by \$103 million...\$103.8 million as a result of the Financial Stabilization Loan and further draw downs on the Policy Base Loan. Indebtedness to the IMF also increase by \$14.1 million on the draw down on the Rapid Credit Facility to aid in the Tomas and Flood Damage Rehabilitation and those are very cheap monies. These increases were moderated by the reductions in other loans as a result of the repayment of principal some of the more important ones are these-am talking on the external debt. State Owned Enterprises Loans not serviced by the Central Government fell by \$19.9 million; a total of \$27.4 million was re-paid on the bonds. The public debt as at September the 30th, 2011 is comprised as follows: Domestic \$491.35 million, External \$730.35 million, total \$1.22 million. A debt service as I have indicated

before...a total debt service is \$131.8 million. The...and the debt service requirements comprise, interest payment, \$51.45 million; \$74.33 million Amortization; and Sinking Fund \$6 million.

Honourable Members, Mr. Speaker, it is my duty to draw to your attention that interest payments are 3.4% lower than last year's approved budget, this is as a direct result of the Loans Swap that was undertaken by way of the CDB Financial Stabilization Loan which was associated...which ran concurrently with the sale of the 51% of the National Commercial Bank, where higher interest domestic loans were exchanged for a lower interest external loan; so please note 3.4 tenth lower than last year's approved budget the interest payments. Principles payments are expected to be 3.6% above the amount budgeted in 2011 and more details on the public debt can be found on pages 653-659 of the Estimates.

Goods & Services

Expenditure on Goods & Services is estimated to increase in 2011 to \$76.1 million, a modest increase of 1% over the approved budget for this item in 2011. There is always upward pressure on this area of spending, but we are making strenuous efforts to ensure that all ministries and departments become more cost conscious and improve operational efficiency, we gotta cut out a lot of waste. Some of the line items where there were increases...we have increases over 2011 approved budget as follows: Materials & Supplies is estimated at \$22.7 million up 5.2%, or \$1.1 million; Local Travel & Subsistence which provides funds to support the supply of Government services in the field amounts to \$5.9 million, an increase of 5.95; because I tell you this, those were experienced in Government-you [have] this category Local Travel & Subsistence if...some public servants do not mind they go ahead and wait but there are some, unless they get their local travel you not going to get them move very easily, so it is an important thing to get everybody to work...let's let's address the question as best as we can in the circumstances. I want to say this; we have a lot of public servants who are doing yeoman work and I tell you I have to single out the nineteen persons who are working in the field, dealing with Black Sigatoka, the Banana Unit and the others, men working on the Sundays without pay, people getting up at 5 o'clock in the morning, I really have to thank them publically I have already showed my thanks to them in other ways and I continue to thank them. The third line item where we have had...where we are having increases this year over last year Rental of Assets \$6.6 million, an increase of 6%. This item...this line item has been increasing

over the years; while many Governments owned building remain in a state of repair...and disrepair and unoccupied.

Discussions have already started on the development of an action plan to re-construct, rehabilitate and repair existing Government buildings and to relinquish rented quarters where feasible and we have stated that exercise in what is known as the old Treasury building and then Professional and Consultancy cost expected to go up by 22.2% to \$2.9 million, this increase results from the re-classification of Software License cost for the computerized passport system from Operating & Maintenance and the provision of \$300,000.00 to meet similar costs for the computerized electoral system, these details are provided on pages 324...302 of the Estimates. I have to make the point that we gotta get the software in all the passports system right and we have too for elections, democracy is not cheap so we have to fix up the electoral system.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, the functional classification recurrent budget, one can find them at numerals xvii...Roman Numerals xvii-xix.

Capital Estimates

The Capital Estimates amount to \$184.9 million, this represents the 4.7% or \$8.3 million increase over the investment budget...capital investment budget for 2011. Four Ministries account for 70.3% of the Capital Estimates for 2012, I just want to make this point, Mr. Speaker, I am talking about Honourable Members must be aware and certainly the general public, I am not talking about all public sector investment, I am talking about public sector investment inside of the capital budget of the Government. For instance when VINLEC does investment or Water Authority, unless the Government contributes a sum to it appears in the budget that is investment done by them. The Port Authority they may borrow loans and do things or they generate from their own resources, those are separate issues of in...public sector investments.

Sticking to 2012 in the Central Government let us identify the four ministries which account for the 40...70.3% of the Capital estimates; the Ministry of Transport & Works has been allocated 23.7% of the capital budget which amounts to \$74.9 million. This represents a significant increase over the amount allocated to the Ministry in the 2011 estimates. I just want to say this, Mr. Speaker, that a number of projects have come to maturation, in a way we have a lot of...we have grants and loans in relation to some post-Tomas matters where we have done some

temporary work and we have to do permanent work those have come to maturation. The Ministry of National Security, Sea Ports and Airports, not just National Security I want to say this National Security, Sea Ports, Airports, that Ministry has been provided with \$36.1 million or 19.5% of the capital budget for 2012. This represents a decline of 6.7% when compared with the proportion allocated to this Ministry in 2011. Thirdly, the Ministry of Education has been allocated \$28.5 million or 15.4% of the capital budget. This figure is 14.2% below the approved budget for 2011 and the reason for this, a number of the big capital projects spending in Education, a number of them have been...have come to an end and this is why we are been seeing some rebalancing in some other Ministries on the capital side. The Ministry of Finance and Planning amounts...accounts for 11.6% of the 2012 capital budget, the sum of \$21.4 million is 4.5% lower than the amount allocated to the Ministry in the 2011 estimates.

An analysis of the Capital Budget by mean Functional Classification heads provide useful information, four of the nine functional heads account for 77% accounts for the capital budget; I just want to say we did...what we did just now with the four heads those were Ministries, am now going now Capital Spending by way of Functional Classification, so four Ministries had gotten 70.3%, Functional Classification now, four of the nine functional heads as you would find in the estimates have 77% of the Capital budget these are as follows:

1. Economic Affairs has received a share of 39.6% of the capital budget, this investment program which is estimated at \$73.2 million is intended to stimulate growth in the key sectors of the economy.
2. Education accounts for 15.45 of the budget;
3. Environmental Protection has been provided with \$23 million or 12.4% of the capital budget, this amount...this represent a significant increase over the \$2.6 million allocated for this functional head in 2011- \$23 million and you know I will come to each shortly and;
4. The Health Sector has been allocated nearly 10%, 9.5% of the 2012 capital budget, the sum of \$17.5 million is 29.6% more than the \$13.5 million budgeted for this sector in the 2011 budget, so you notice the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance and Planning, they have big chunks in this year's budget but Health has a huge chunk because we having 3 year spending in the

area of the resources which we are having from the European Union the 10th TDF, where we have Health as the focal sector, that is why I talk about re-balancing.

Mr. Speaker, I would provide some details, under Economic Affairs and projects under this include major infrastructure developments such as roads, bridges, ports and airports infrastructure. Some of the larger ones under this category include the E.T. Joshua Improvement, \$4 million; Argyle International Airport, \$15 million; Rehabilitation of Colonarie Bridge, \$3.8 million; Tourism and Private Sector Development, \$7.7 million; Support the Primary Agriculture, a million; EGRIP Project, which is a technology project, \$2.3 million; Rehabilitation of the Vigie Highway, \$2.5 million; Langley Park River Basin Rehabilitation, \$3.7 million; Kingstown Clean Up- very important, \$3.7 million; and in the estimate...in the budget the Minister will probably talk more about this because we are having...we are going to have a partnership with a telecommunications company in doing some rehabilitation and clean up in Kingstown, Energy Conservation Fund, \$2.4 million; Port Development, \$1.3 million; and Farm support through small machinery \$1.3 million. Honourable Members would see we would have touched a series of areas for economic development in the country. In the area of Education, what do we have? Improvement of education through ICT, \$15 million; Basic Education, \$25.3 million; OECS Education Development Project, \$1.6 million; Expansion of Secondary Schools, \$1.5 million- I would say that some of the monies on Basic Education and the OECS Education Development Project they have to do with retention monies if you look into the details but they have to be paid. Tech-Voc Education, \$1 million; Book Loan Scheme \$1 million.

Environmental Protection

This country is a small island developing state with a fragile eco-system and is highly vulnerable to natural disasters; we must therefore make the requisite investment to reduce the vulnerability, to strengthen our resilience and disaster response capabilities. To this end in 2012 in the estimates we have the following items: National Disaster Management rehabilitation, \$9.8 million; Regional Disaster Vulnerability Reductions, \$5.5 million; Emergency Recovery Project, \$6.6 million- Emergency Recovery Project this comes largely from the World Bank and the others are components of a big World Bank project which we intend to implement over a 4 year, 4^{1/2} year period of \$56 million. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is selected as one of the Island States in the Caribbean for a Pilot Study...a Pilot Work sorry it's bricks and mortar projects and also a lot of institutional capacity and awareness building and so on and so forth, a

very good program it was launched a few weeks ago, people from the World Bank came down and I delivered feature address...

HONOURABLE SPEAKER: Honourable Member you have ten minutes.

DR. The HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I am obliged, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can't over emphasize this particular area-Environmental Protection. You know there are some things which a lot of people take for advantage, but if you are a serious policy maker you got to address our vulnerability to natural disasters, we see what can happen to our country.

Health

In the Health Sector, these projects seek to develop and modernise the sector by improving and expanding the physical plant, equipment and other infrastructure, the most significant ones are: the Modern Medical Complex \$5 million; Modernisation of the Health centre the 10th TDF- which I referred to earlier- \$8.6 million; Oxygen Plant and Bulk Storage, \$2 million; purchase for the equipment for the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital, \$600,000.00. The details for the entire capital estimates are found on pages 603 to 609.

Mr. Speaker as I outlined today, Finance Committee yesterday, when we have monies where we have already signed the Financing Agreements and all the technical work is done and you are implementing- take for instance, we have here the modernisation of the health sector 10th TDF, \$8.6 million, that is what the Ministry of Works, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Finance estimate they would be able to spend, but if they can spend \$10 million, they would get it because the money is there in the bank, if they can spend \$12 million, so I think we need to put this kind of analysis in the context because we have the money from the European Union.

Capital Receipts

The financing for the capital budgets amounts to \$286.6 million, Domestic Receipts, \$80 million, comprising Capital Revenue of \$20.2 million, Loans \$59.8 million and External Receipts of \$206.6 million, Grants \$61.3 million, Loans \$44.6, million, Other Receipts \$1.7 million.

In 2011, a total of \$20.2 million will be taken in from the Sale of Government owned assets to assist in the financing of the capital program. In 2012, the Sale of crown Lands we would have \$1 million and the Sale of another portion of the Bank of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines shares we are expected to yield \$19.2 million. Remember we have to...we have twenty percentage points of the shares but we have 40% now having disposed of 51 then 9 to the NIS and the bank employees and then of the other 40 we putting 20 on the market. We should have been on the market earlier I had hoped we would have done that by Independence but the valuation of the shares, the firm which was selected to value the shares took a little longer than we had anticipated, so that's...and we are hoping that by February we would complete the share...the sale of the shares, the one half of the 40% which now reside in the Government.

Regional Market

We are going on the Regional Securities Market...Securities Exchange. We are getting a date that is why we have to do all the work, all the prospectus you know there is some technical work to be done then we have to go on the exchange, we have to get a date and so on when we going on. All that is being worked out, all the technical people are involved, I just got a report a few days ago including- well at Friday frankly when all of us were present at the Shareholders meeting of the Bank of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

External Receipts

Grants are expected to make a significant contribution...sorry; in addition to what we getting from the Bank of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in terms of the Domestic yields, Domestic loans will be raised to fund a number of projects included in the 2012 estimates.

External Receipts- Grants are expected to make a significant contribution to the financing plan for the capital budget for 2012. The EU will provide \$32.7 million in official development assistance and the Caribbean Development Bank will also contribute \$4.6 million in Grants. The Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines will receive Grants totalling \$20.2 million from three friendly countries namely: Republic of China on Taiwan, \$15.5 million; United States of America, \$3.5 million; and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela \$1.3 million. Important external loan flow are anticipated from two multi-lateral sources, the CDB, \$12.4 million and the World Bank, \$11.4 million. Two loans will also be drawn from the

Governments of the Republic of China on Taiwan, \$11.4 million and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, \$8.4 million.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, the 2012 Estimates are fashioned to respond to the current economic circumstances and the strategic paths which this Government has chosen. It balances restraints on the recurrent side with well-targeted capital projects aimed at increasing economic activities in the key sectors of the economy; some may prefer me to say the main sectors of the economy because they may not like the word “key”.

As we approach 2012, I urge all managers of all Ministries and Departments to pay closer attention to controlling costs, raising their work effort and increasing output. All of us must work harder to make the public service a more efficient and effective organisation. These estimates are sound, they are fit for the times, they combine prudence and enterprise for the development for this country and its people. I am obliged.

HONOURABLE SPEAKER: Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM ESTUACE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make my contribution to debate on the Estimates for the year 2012. I have listened very carefully to the presentation by the Prime Minister and Honourable Minister of Finance and to what he had to say in relation to these estimates. Today, Mr. Speaker, I am going to take a different point of departure in my own response to estimates of 2012...for 2012.

Mr. Speaker, I want to on the outset place these estimates within the context of our present economic and financial circumstances. Mr. Speaker, these are not easy times and in my mind the estimates for 2012 are particularly important in light of our performance...economic and financial performance for the last five years. Mr. Speaker, our country and I want to place these estimates, Mr. Speaker, in that setting quite deliberately because sometimes because we deal with estimates every year you have a tendency to place a lot of emphasis on examination of the details to the figures in the estimates and perhaps not as much emphasis on what these figures mean in terms of improvement in our economic performance.

We are debating these estimates at a time, Mr. Speaker, when this country has undergone three consecutive years of negative growth 2008, 2009, 2010 and [are] poised for a possible fourth year of negative growth and Mr. Speaker, there is no secret that this lack of growth has been characterised by an increasingly poor fiscal financial situation with significant current and cash deficits and that totals...cash deficits and the current totals something of \$1.6 million for 2012.

Mr. Speaker, our current performance...performance for the Government for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines includes a number of negatives, sometimes you know of the inability to pay some wages on a timely basis, shortages of Goods & Services including hospital supplies amongst owing and in arrears to private sector and some other bodies which is set at some \$39 million as at September 2011, the Prime Minister gave an update it says between that time and now it is down to 22. A debt to the DP ratio which has to be monitored and over the last few years significant recurrent expenditure growth as compared to revenue and Mr. Speaker, with the deficits and inability to provide local counterpart financing for projects that are in the public sector investment program and designed by the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. These are realities, Mr. Speaker, and we have to address our minds to them and frame our estimates in a manner which points clearly to a decision on the part of the Government as to how we are to get out of that morass.

On the capital side we need to see what extent our capital projects are likely to reduce unemployment which according to the IMF stands somewhere in the order between 25 and 30% of the work force and, Mr. Speaker, you know part of the exercise over the last five years when we came to this Parliament we heard talk about; you know this is the biggest budget ever as in the case of the year 2010 when the budget was set and our expenditure was set at \$913 million. When in reality, Mr. Speaker, that budget was never sustainable, it was *staked.

Mr. Speaker, among the main reasons for the poor economic performance was bad weather and I am in total agreement with that and the international crisis, but Mr. Speaker, a significant contributor which has not been thoroughly discussed or analysed is the poor performance of the Government as characterised by its lack of action to stimulate the economy as can be seen in its lack of ability to pay off the private sector for goods and services, the inability, even a few months ago provided the spraying for our bananas and a number of other areas where there is obviously a shortage of funds and Mr. Speaker given that kind of background, given the

continuing and sustained levels of negative growth the estimates for 2012, therefore assume a much greater significance as this country seeks relief from the present economic circumstances.

One searches these estimates in an effort to discern a change in policy, an approach by Government to resuscitate the economy as the nation clamours for positive growth and for jobs. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, so bad we have become that the IMF economic outlook published in September this year identified Saint Vincent and the Grenadines as the only country of the 32 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean projected to have the negative growth-the only one and alas, Mr. Speaker, I do not see the substance in these estimates that will move us from that position. It is 683 pages of much the same as we have had for the last five years and it is that, Mr. Speaker, that has lead us to the current condition. The Estimates for 2012 are not fundamentally different from that of 2011. How will these estimates contribute to the revival of the economic growth for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines? These are some of the questions that we have to ponder.

Mr. Speaker, I want to at this time to place this whole question of the estimates in its economic and financial setting; in all of who have been granted the privilege to serve our people at the highest level- that is in the Parliament of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. We recognise that there are significant institutional arrangements of our own making which we have to absorb in our quest for improved economic performance. All of us, Mr. Speaker, in this Parliament are aware that the OECS Countries all share a central bank; the East Caribbean Central Bank, unlike many of our neighbours and many other countries in the world which have their own Central Bank to deal with their own economy. I am not knocking the arrangement, I am stating that that arrangement is the fact, indeed I support the arrangement, and I think it has been good for our region. That arrangement was set sometime back in 1976 and I had the opportunity to participate in that very meeting when the exchange rate for instance was set at US\$1 to EC\$2.70. I am not knocking the Central Bank; I am saying our Central Bank arrangements are a reality with which we have to deal and it has implications for the ability of Government in terms of taking decisions individually in the OECS to stimulate our economy.

The fact that we have one Central Bank does not, Mr. Speaker, permit us to take any action independent of the other OECS countries as far as monetary policy is concerned if we want to stimulate the economy of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. For instance St. Vincent, cannot on its own deal with questions of interest rate without taking into account the other countries, but

Barbados can do so with its Central Bank. If our Government were to think that the devaluation of the EC dollar would help our economy by stimulating our exports, we could not do that, because we are a part of a central banking arrangement. So effectively, Mr. Speaker, we in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines cannot utilise monetary policy on an individual basis to stimulate our economy because of the nature of the arrangement by which we are bound. Therefore, and I think the Prime Minister recognises this; therefore we are restricted in terms of providing that stimulus for our economy, to our fiscal situation.

The policies we adapt will relate to the fiscal situation and the estimates in the budget are an embodiment of that, because that is the avenue that we have left to us since we have no control over monetary policy; and therefore what we do about the estimates becomes very critical for the development of our people and our country. You know this is the context; this is the reality in which all Governments of the OECS exist. For instance, Mr. Speaker, while we cannot set an individual rate for St. Vincent, certainly from a fiscal stand point we can increase taxes if we want to, in particular areas to improve our revenue positions. We can reduce expenditure on certain items, we can borrow on appropriate terms or give other incentives of a financial nature for example; tax holidays. We can determine on our own what projects we want to put forward in our public sector investment program.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, the estimates for us is such an important document and that is why, Mr. Speaker, this particular time in our history we must pay a great deal of attention to the estimates; in this case the estimates for 2012. Through it, we should be able to discern Government policies to get us out of this negative position, we are able to discern our approach to reduce our debt burden and achieving primary surpluses and the only respect coming out of this document to be able form an opinion as to whether the estimates has presented will contribute to growth in future; and in what way will it contribute and to what extent will it contribute and that is the context, Mr. Speaker, in which I wish to place this debate on estimate.

Mr. Speaker, we are in this position today of major fiscal deficits because of the performance or lack of performance of this Government because that why we are where we are today approaching a fourth consecutive year of negative growth with major deficits which we cannot fill and even these estimates cannot fill them. That is not the fault of the International Committee; it is our fault, the fault of the Government of the day because action is not taken when it should have been taken. Why is it that St. Vincent is the only country in Latin America

and the Caribbean who has a negative growth projection from the IMF for 2011, why? They face the same international economic crisis that we faced, countries like St. Lucia faced Tomas and so on but all have gone back to growth by 2010. What is so different from us? What is the separate factor that affects us in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines that we have been unable to do as the other countries have done? Nobody doubts the impact of the economic crisis; nobody doubts the negative impact of the weather. What it is about us that is we alone out of thirty two (32) countries could not find our way to get of negative growth by 2011.

Mr. Speaker, this Government and others before it as they have all done during the course of the year enter into a consultation with International Monetary Fund and this is normally done prior before the end of the year so the extent that there is an agreement or disagreement on issues your estimates would show some reflection of that and prior to these estimates, Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines held its Article 4 Consultation with the IMF. Such a consultation involves a full economic and financial review of our economy and on the 16th of November, 2011, the Board of Directors of the International Monetary Fund met to discuss the Staff Report on the IMF Staff who came here to hold this consultation. And at the end of that Board meeting, the Public Information Notice or Press Release was issued by the Board which recognise the difficulties associated with Hurricane Tomas and the heavy rains of May 2011, they also recognise...April sorry...they also recognise the general world economic situations but they also noted, Mr. Speaker, Government revenues, Government Expenditure in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines was well ahead of its revenue. They recognise that very often difficult choices have to be made but the fact remains that we are well into an era of deficits and if one wants to change and bring back our country on a path to economic growth, one has to look at what can be done, what change we need to make to deal with expenditure rising much faster than our revenue especially, Mr. Speaker, when we are speaking of the Recurrent Budget.

There is nothing wrong, Mr. Speaker, with an overall deficit, it is generally accepted worldwide, that overall deficit of 3.5% of a Gross Domestic Product is acceptable but on the recurrent budget those things that deal with wages and salaries and interest payments and so on and NIS and so on they expect your revenue to be greater than your expenditure. So that you have a potion, a surplus to pass on to help with your capital projects because nobody wants to lend you 100% for any project, they might want to lend you 90% or 80% or in some cases with institutions like VINLEC they might want to lend you 60%. So you have to have your own resources; I have been saying that year after year, people say, "*oh man dha is doom an gloom*

talk.” The reality is that is what expected of us as a nation that the basic things which we do in terms of our recurrent expenditure including wages and salaries must be funded by ourselves. By the activities that we undertake, by the taxes that we determine and not by others. The days of budget support which was the norm of colonial times have gone and is only in the most difficult circumstances that you can access budget support.

So Mr. Speaker, I look at these estimates in that context but the Board said a lot of things and I want to raise them because they should be remembered, they also said that apart from the substantial deficit that the inflation rate is again on the rise with 2.8% year by year calculation especially because of fuel prices and food-2.8% year by year and the important point, Mr. Speaker and I want to read it, I want to quote it

“The IMF welcomes the Government’s plan to introduce Market Based Property Tax”

That’s 1.

“To strengthen revenue administration is welcome containing the Public Sector Wage Bill, limiting state transfers to state owned enterprises, rationalising spending on Goods and Services...”

And they went on

“While recognising Government’s intention, the Directors and Staff wanted a more ambitious consolidation, including Pensions and Civil Service Reform...”

I want to repeat that we recognise that actions had to be taken and they identify some of the actions. Throughout their discussions with Government they will not get agreement with any Government with everything but they said

“While recognising Government intentions, the Directors and Staff wanted a more ambitious consolidation, including Pensions and Civil Service...”

And the Prime Minister referred to that in his own presentation as something that is of major significance that should be dealt with in the budget itself, but they also highlighted the need to increase growth potential, diversify the economy, improving the business climate and enhancing the competitiveness this would to reduce the large and unsustainable deficit.

You know there is no need; any Government who has to go through Article 4 Consultations with the IMF is not obliged to follow their recommendation. Any Government can make a decision to do otherwise, that is their right as a sovereign Government and that is why these matters are dealt with as a matter of negotiation but there comes a time when they have to part company but in so doing, Mr. Speaker, we have to be also conscious of what the consequences can be from later on for our own economy because let us face it, the very countries with whom we associate and hope to get assistance for are normally members of the same IMF those from whom we get bilateral assistance including places like Canada and so forth they are members of the IMF and there comes a time and if we are not in a position to deal with our deficit with what we do not want- an IMF program, because they have the...they are able to influence individual bilateral donors as how to deal with your economy especially small economies like ours and I think the lesson of Greece is instructive at this time much like a country in Europe that allowed itself to let its debt get out of control and run into major difficulties with its deficits and so on and now they are under what is called the Troika which includes International Monetary Fund, and they are now dictating to the Government of Greece what they must do in order to get financial assistance to continue their growth and development. Well I do not want Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to come into that context at all and it behoves us to be very careful with how we frame our estimates and the decisions that we make.

We do not even have a Director who we could call our own in the traditional sense, we are so small in the world, we do not like to hear that but it is a fact, we are so small in the world that our Director is the Canadian Director and we will have somebody from our country in the OECS who would sit in his office and participate in the decision making; but is Canada who votes on our behalf by the IMF and the World Bank. I want us to understand those realities Mr. Speaker, we have to understand them and therefore we manage our affairs in a manner which allows us the kind of levels of Independence we think we need to have but we have...it is our responsibility... whatever happens in the world it is our responsibility to put our house in order and we cannot do it alone. It is an inter-dependant world, you know years ago when I joined the Caribbean Development Bank the Inter-American Development Bank-IDB amended its charter so that it cannot give loans directly to the OECS countries because we are too small we always get our loans through CDB, they amended their charter to do that.

Mr. Speaker, you see is in this broad context I wish us to view [cough] the estimates for 2012. I deliberately did this, Mr. Speaker, because I think that setting needs to be understood by the

people of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, I feel that there is a lot more people in here are aware of those realities but in the general public perception I am not so sure that is the situation.

Mr. Speaker, let us look at some of the portion of the 2012 estimates because individual speakers on our side will deal with the areas that come under their shadow portfolios. Mr. Speaker, the estimates 2011-2012 is a mere \$7.4 million larger at \$793 million as compared to \$786 million in the year before-2011, and it is noteworthy, Mr. Speaker, that the 2012 estimates is \$119 million less...the 2012 estimates is \$119 million less than our 2010 estimates and we are boasting of having the biggest estimates as in the case of some growth, I do not know what growth that was and in 2012 we are down to 793.

Mr. Speaker, I look at some of the individual categories. First of all Mr. Speaker, Wages and Salaries are \$250.6 million. Mr. Speaker, can you tell me how much time I have here?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Inaudible

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Oh my God...

[Interjection]

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: ...the context, the context [laughter] will remain valid.

HONOURABLE SABATO CAESAR: Inaudible

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Good [laughter] the context will remain valid. *Doh worry boh dat and I know u know dat too.* Mr. Speaker, Wages and Salaries.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Order!

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Wages and Salaries, Mr. Speaker, \$250 million, up about \$7 million. The Prime Minister has indicated that the difference has to do with increments and some additional posts, that there will be no salary increases in 2012. He also pointed out that the \$3 million owed to the Public Service under previous agreement would be subject to

how well reform takes place for the first 6 months of the year. Well I would say to the owners now, forget it for 2012, I think that is the reality of what we see before us. In an effort to try and meet with some of the issues raised by the International Monetary Fund, the Government has decided to restrict itself in terms of any new salary increases.

Pensions and NIS, Mr. Speaker, an increase of just around \$1 million but still a substantial figure for the \$7 million...you want me to help you make your case for you ah nah. [Laughter] \$47 million, a substantial sum, Mr. Speaker, and I believe that we are going to get some real pass for the budget, not here today, some of those which are going to bite, Mr. Speaker, we would get them in the budget itself and this is one area where I am expecting. I have taken note to the fact Mr. Speaker that the profits if the National Insurance Scheme has fallen from \$27 million in 2008 to \$5.6 million 2010 and therefore I am expecting from the Prime Minister action in relation to this matter.

Other Transfers, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I hope you taking off for this time you know...

DR. HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Inaudible

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: You know I understand all that, I am saying...I am saying you would deal with it when you give the budget. Eh?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Inaudible

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Other Transfers, Mr. Speaker, you have a decline there of about \$10.5 million and that is transfers to different types of entities. I am not sure how all of that is broken down but that has a decline of 10.5%. Then you have the question, Mr. Speaker, of interest which is down to \$51.5 million and this is attributed to the CDB loan in relation to NCB where the interest rate is lower than the loans that were replaced and;

Goods and Services Mr. Speaker, from \$75.3 million to \$76.1 million that is about \$7, 8 hundred thousand increase and we know of some of the shortages we now have and we would see how this extra \$800 what it does.

Mr. Speaker, the other significant item is Amortization that the payment of principle on our debt is \$774.3 million and the Sinking Fund of \$6 million, thus making total expenditure of \$608 million which is about less than...a little less than a million more...a little less than a million in the previous year.

So Mr. Speaker, you really do not have much of a difference in terms of the total figures of expenditure, but what is still there, Mr. Speaker, is that when you look for the deficits and you relate expenditure revenue we find that the Current Deficit would be \$21.3 million and the Cash Deficit would be \$101.6 million-the Cash Deficit, that is the Current Deficit plus the amount you put up for Amortization and Sinking Fund, the reality is that you must pay the principal in your debt. The cash deficit is therefore very important and how you finance that deficit then becomes an issue of major concern and you know last year they put in this smh! Other Capital Receipts, Leacock was asking about, he got an answer for it, *he get ah googly*, the point, Mr. Speaker, is that again this is a clear, the batting is good but you dealing with peoples' lives eh smh! Peoples' lives you dealing with here eh.

So Mr. Speaker, when I look at the recurrent expenditure there is really no major change, there really is no major change, we have the figures also on the revenue, Mr. Speaker, Tax Revenue is \$471 million uhm, Non-Tax Revenue \$36 million, total of 507, that is what minus the revenue...having taken that from expenditure you have a deficit of \$21 million. That has to be filled somewhere and financed somewhere...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: 5 minutes

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: You hitting hard today, boy. Mr. Speaker, similarly on the Capital Budget, Mr. Speaker, on the Capital Budget you have a situation where we have an increase of \$176.6 million...\$284 million, again not a very large or significant figure. But I am finding it very difficult, Mr. Speaker, to find the real difference between the budget of 2011 and the budget for 2012 and how it is going to produce the economic growth that we say we are going to have and I notice that the Prime Minister had said 2% but when I read the document they said 2% by 2016, so I am assuming the Prime Minister is referring to 2016 because what is put here, Mr. Speaker uh? What is put here, Mr. Speaker *eh* carrying us to no 2% in 2012. The people of this country, Mr. Speaker, want to get jobs; the Government of this country, Mr.

Speaker, has the responsibility, working with the Private Sector to get those jobs, we have that declining for some time now as we have been solely into negative growth.

The question is what do these estimates do? What do they do in terms of creating jobs, in terms of removing the deficit, without which we would have more difficulty creating job. What does it do? What is in there in compare to last year which means that Vincentians would be better off and how did we get there in the first case. We got there in the first case because those issues were ignored by this Government and that is what led along with the economic crisis and so on towards sustaining so many consecutive years of negative growth at the expense of our people, that is what it meant, Mr. Speaker, and when I look at these estimates today I...despite what the Prime Minister has said I want to know where the growth has come from, where the people of St. Vincent are going to get some relief in terms of employment. The Prime Minister, he a hard decision to make in some instances, I understand that too because sometimes you have to make a choice between public assistance and other areas, but the fact remains, Mr. Speaker, that throughout Latin America and the Caribbean we are the only one still left in the present condition of negative growth and there has to be a reason for that and the reason is over there!

[Loud Applause]

DR. HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Inaudible

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: That is, that is alright...

DR. HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Inaudible...and you are over there

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: *Yea an I am ova here*

DR. HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: *wha happen you eh wah come over yah go be over here*

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: *Eh? Where are you?*

DR. HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Inaudible

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: oh?

DR. HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I am over here... [Inaudible]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: [Striking the gavel]

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, you know this is the Christmas Season... you know this is the Christmas Season, it is the time of goodwill and good cheer, you know, it is the time when we all like to get peace and on good terms of our neighbours but I cannot tell the people of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines that this is going to carry them any further up the ladder, I cannot say that. What I can say, Mr. Speaker, is that I want to wish the members of the House, the Clerk's Office, the Speaker's Office, those responsible for our communications, Sergeant-At-Arms...

[Interjection]

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: hmm? I did not hear that...

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Inaudible

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: you...you done know why you not in East Kingstown is it? Somebody beat you! Ok! Mr. Speaker...

HONOURABLE JULIAAN FRANCIS: Inaudible

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Alright! I want to wish, Mr. Speaker, including those in my constituency, not just the NDP supporters, all the members of the East Kingstown Constituency and the people of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines I want them to have within the constraints that they face a Merry Christmas. Much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: ...for the debate...Honourable Member for the Northern Grenadines. Just a minute

DR. HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I believe perhaps that this is a convenient time for us to take the lunch...uhm we can return at two o'clock...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I am excited [laughter]

DR. HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: [laughter] You mean the Deputy Leader of your party is the Night Watchman...the Deputy Leader of your party is the white...I drew out the Night Watchman

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: [laughter]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I have never heard a more damning commentary...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: [laughter]

DR. HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: The number... [Laughter] the number 2 batsman on your side, the man after the opening...

[Interjection]

DR. HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: ...he is your Night watchman oohh!! I see what your ambition is [Laughter]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: [laughter]

DR. HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: You know what is a gaffe? A gaffe is speaking the truth by accident. A gaffe is speaking the truth by accident! [Laughter]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: [banging the gravel] Honourable Member, Honourable Member, [banging the gravel]

DR. HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker,

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Just a minute Prime Minister, Honourable Senator that, Honourable Senator Frederick, that kind of behaviour is not accepted. I am saying that kind of behaviour is not accepted! You have been carrying on with it for the entire morning and kindly stop! [Bangs gravel]. Honourable Prime Minister!

DR. HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I did not hear it, Mr. Speaker, but you heard it...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Well I hear everything, everything I hear from where I am sitting...

HONOURABLE VYNETTE FREDERICK: Inaudible

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

DR. HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House do stand suspended for the luncheon period until 2:00pm.

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

**Question put and agreed to
House suspended until 2:00pm.
House resumed at 2:05pm**

HONOURABLE SPEAKER: Pray be seated. We will continue our debate as we broke off for the lunch suspension. The Honourable Prime Minister would be a few minutes late so that should not affect us. When we took the break we...suspension that is...acknowledged the Honourable Member for Northern Grenadines I would invite him in a few minutes give me a chance... [Inaudible]...alright Honourable Member you may begin your debate.

DR. HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to make my contribution to the debate of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year 2012.

Mr. Speaker, the remarks that were made earlier by the Honourable Prime Minister in his presentation were somewhat different from what we have come to expect in this Honourable House in that there was a subdued tone and an emphasis on caution means that uhm reality has finally set in with respect to the fiscal position of the Government and the state of the economy in this country. It has taken a long time but the message seems to have finally sunk in with the Honourable Minister of Finance.

So we can say, Mr. Speaker, it appears that the age of bombast is over, this is one now where we are choosing words carefully and when the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance says that we ought to be courting prudence. We have to be careful about what we say, what we do and how we proceed going forward, but prudence has its place you know, Mr. Speaker, it has its role but it's most effective when it is used in a timely manner. You would agree that if you driving fast and you run off the road and you hit a tree it *ain't* much sense in being careful in stepping out of the car at that point Mr. Speaker, you should be thinking of turning over the wheel to somebody else and say "hear man you drive" no point in saying "*leh we be careful when we drive again.*"

But Mr. Speaker, we welcome the soberness in the presentation, but it's somewhat at odds as well with the many words in the document, a lot of things that do not add up and I am sure a lot of my colleagues on this side will be pointing to some of them and a lot of promises written here in plain English that are not fulfilled. This is so right across the board; if you look at firstly glance at some of the Ministries you would see that a lot of what is said there as indicators for the year 2011 much of it, in some case most of it was not accomplished.

So this is what I mean when I say, Mr. Speaker, that the tone and the attitude of seriousness in this speech but also be matched with what is written in the estimates. The revenue that is expected to be collected should be projected with some degree of confidence that those funds would be collected. We have raised the concern over and over again that the category of Other Receipts of revenue to be collected when you approach \$100 million, you simply do not expect you would be able to raise those funds. So it means that the program that was set out by the

Government would be short and therefore it should be tailored, realistically to fit with the finances that we cannot expect to collect with some degree of confidence.

Mr. Speaker, when we come to this House and we debate the budget and the estimates it is one of the most serious functions that we must perform as legislators and as representatives of the people. There are people throughout the communities they are looking for a word about what is going to happen with the road approaching their house, teachers and parents expecting to hear what might happen regarding the school that they work at or the children attend, people in business they want to hear what the capital programs would be and later as we do the budget revenue measures, fiscal policies that would stimulate the economy that may encourage them to invest...invest in one direction or another and they must be able to rely, Mr. Speaker, on what we say here. The politics should take second place when it comes to this function that we came here to perform today and come January 9th when we debate the Appropriation Bill.

So Mr. Speaker, I am like the Honourable Leader of the Opposition disappointed that we have even in this time of crisis...unprecedented crisis in this country, we have the same approach to the estimates and the same approach from the Government in terms of how we proceed with the economic affairs of this country going forward and I say it is an unprecedented time in our history because in this year we would have had four years of consecutive economic decline. You would recall that in 2007, I believe in this Honourable House, the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance said in his budget presentation that we were on the cusp of an economic take off, well if we were on the cusp and we did take off, Mr. Speaker, we were on a precipice and we are free falling since then. So what we need to do is, Mr. Speaker, to recognise the reality around us, wishful thinking does not get us where we want to be. We have to do analysis, not just of the economic situation here and certainly not only of the politics here in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, but what is happening in the wider world as the Honourable Leader of the Opposition pointed out this morning, something that we all should know but which we conveniently overlook is this, Mr. Speaker, we are a tiny economy in this world and we basically we do not make policy that affects other people, they make what affects us and we have to understand that reality and simply make our own projections based on what is happening there and not just simply say sweet sounding words for electors here hoping to please them and then we have to come back and apologise...well we do not even apologise in this country when we are so wrong, but we come back and we tend to pretend that these realities

are just presently emerging or what we said before has been mischaracterized or that they did not mean anything.

The point is Mr. Speaker that what we doing here is deadly serious it means a lot to people, their living is at stake. You know I talk to individuals who operate in the Tourism Industry, particularly in the yachting sector and they are very concerned about what is happening, about what we are doing, what the Government is doing on a day to day basis not in setting general policy, because they see how it is affecting their own livelihoods and I would deal with some of the specifics, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, my Honourable colleague from North Leeward...the Member from North Leeward would have a lot to say about this situation with respect to Agriculture in his response, but there is certain things, Mr. Speaker, that I think anyone of use can recognise and we feel impelled to remark about. When I talk about the seriousness of preparation and the importance of this exercise, I refer to what we see for example at page 378 Rural Transformation; this is part of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Rural transformation.

Mr. Speaker, if we look at page 378 of the estimates, there is a whole list of results indicators in the left hand column and for those persons who are listening outside, the estimates are presented. There are a lots of facts and figures and there is also a lot of text in which the Ministry sets out some objectives which are supposed to be targets that could be accomplished within the year and they should be measureable so they can ascertain whether they have been accomplished or not. We are at page 378, the...Mr. Speaker when I came here I did not meet these people here [laughter] so many years ago yes.

The...it says that there is a project to construct at least 10% of the Seawall and 40% of the Administrative Building of Georgetown Road Development Facility by December 2011 and then in the comment side of it, where you supposed to report what was done it was noted that a token prohibition was given for the 2011 budget which hindered implementation. By hinder I suppose it means it wasn't done.

Then there is another item; Direct Road and Traffic Signs and Install Street Furniture between Fitz Hughes and Petit Bordel, this is Rural Transformation at a cost of \$75,000.00 says "this

project was not accepted for funding in the Estimates of Expenditure for 2011.” So the question I ask why is it in the estimates then?

We go down, install at least 26 traffic mirrors along the highway within rural St. Vincent by December 2011, the comment “this project was not accepted for funding in the estimates of expenditure for 2011” so I ask again, why is it in the estimates? What is the whole purpose of preparing estimates?

“Establish...” this is another point... “at least ten backyard gardens each in the rural zones of Barrouallie, Colonarie and Sandy Bay by the end of 2011”- comment-“ this project was not accepted for funding in the estimates of expenditure for 2011.”

We go down to the next item “Secure the transfer of Land Title from the Land and Survey Department for a parcel of land at Barrouallie for the construction of a Community Market at Barrouallie by December 2011”-comment-“No land transfer title has been given by the Lands and Surveys Department to date.” I mean is nobody listening to the Minister?

Next item “complete at least 50% of the construction of the Rural Community Market at Barrouallie by December 2011. Construction hindered due to non-transfer of land”

So that was on this side under Rural Transformation. So it seems, Mr. Speaker there is very little transformation taking place in the Ministry of Rural Transformation because if everything you put forward, you get no support from Cabinet that whole page should have been left blank, because there was nothing here that was approved...that the expenditures were approved. It did not even go through the other processes that other Ministries have done where they put items down with lots of money next to its name and then at the end of the year nothing is done. In this case they did not even bother to put next to the name so I think that the Minister have reason to complain that his Cabinet is not listening to him. There are others, but under another section of his Ministry Basic Needs Trust Fund; again we are looking at the estimates, Mr. Speaker, and there are four issues set out there. The last one says “implement...” I would not read all of them “at least six skills training project under BNTF of six by December 2011” there was no comment, there are three other items, there is no comment.

We go at page 371, Volcano Monitoring, lots of item set out there, two items, three items, no comment. Agricultural Planning on page 373, on-going, most of that page, Mr. Speaker, no comment, so page 374 Agri-trade Policy Research and Advice- provide trade policy advice-this is one of the items for the development of the Agricultural sector. Everybody in this Honourable House, Mr. Speaker, would say that is important but we do not know what happened because there is no comment. So how can we take this document seriously, Mr. Speaker, when the Minister himself does not take it seriously because he has not bothered to present the information to this Honourable House so that we can debate it and inform ourselves about it and inform our constituents about it-the people who sent us here. So is this just an annual exercise that we go through as a ritual because if it is, Mr. Speaker, there are better things we can do with our time than sit here all day or two days dealing with this.

Mr. Speaker, the other issue in the Ministry of Agriculture that I wish to comment on is something that I have raised in this House many times before it has to do with the Fisheries. At page 340 of the estimates there is a reference it is something that I had hoped to see not just to see, it was in last year estimates as well but to hear that there is a concrete plan and a program for implementation and that is the Development of a Seafood Marketing Plan, if memory serves me right, Mr. Speaker, the same thing was said in the last estimates, but as I look through on the comment side of the estimates and I did not see anything that was reported there; first of all in this Ministry, Mr. Speaker, it is difficult to relate the indicators with the comment because they are not set aside one against the other, so I read through the text looking for what is being said about the Development of a Seafood Marketing Plan and I found nothing in the estimates and you will recall, Mr. Speaker, that over the past several years in this House, one of the complaints that I have made is to do with the lack of markets for seafood products. I have dealt with this repeatedly because it affects my constituency, but also because I know, Mr. Speaker, the importance of the Fishing Industry, the potential it has for the country as a whole and this is part of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, but the Fisheries Division seems to be treated as if it really was not an important part of the Ministry. If you look even at the number of words that is allocated to it here in the estimates it's very little that is said and, Mr. Speaker, it is simply not good enough given the problems that we have had in the Fishing Industry in this country and the fact that the matter has been raised over and over again with the Minister that you put in the estimates that you would Develop a Seafood Marketing Plan and you don't even bother to say what happen next.

At page 384 of the estimates, this is where the Ministry...the Minister is projecting what he intends to do in 2012 and we shall see that at in the middle of the page there, Mr. Speaker, there are a few bullet points which relates to Fisheries. One of the things that is said to be done is Develop a Seafood Marketing Plan by August 2012, so we back at it again. At the top it says to complete the restructuring of the Management of all fisheries centres by June 2012. Well I would welcome that, Mr. Speaker, but given the performance so far, I am not at all optimistic, in fact I would not hold my breath, because it has been eleven years since the Ministry of Agriculture has been working on the Fisheries Centre in Paget Farm, Bequia, eleven long years and it is no better now than it was then and they have spent over a million dollars in it because we still cannot export fish and products to the European Union Market from there which was the whole point of spending the money trying to upgrade the facility to improve the processing. It has been a dismal failure, Mr. Speaker, and this is one of the productive areas of our economy. If we could treat those areas where people make a living, where you can earn...where you have an export market, if you can treat it in this sort of run of the mill every day, not carrying way, how are we going to get out of the situation we are in? How are we going to produce Goods and Services that people are going to want to purchase? That is what you are supposed to be doing first and foremost as a Minister responsible for that sector and it is not being done.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to deal with some of the aspects of the estimates that relate to Tourism. To be honest I was hoping that the Minister of Tourism, because he had indicated in one of the side bar comments earlier that he was going to respond I think to the Leader of the Opposition, so I thought he was going to get up before me so that I would have gotten a chance to hear what he has to say, hopefully hear what he has to present for his Ministry and to have...you see you talk to soon...*I ain't finish*...and to have a chance to respond, Mr. Speaker, *smh!* But you would hear it nonetheless.

Mr. Speaker, at page 549 you look at where the discussion of the 2011 result indicators and the comments and I would go through them, a few of them because you see, Mr. Speaker, this is a very, this volume and I know there are many people in the public that would like to have a copy for night time reading [laughter] but they don't so I want to give them a little taste of what is in it.

Mr. Speaker, it says at page 549 “produce...” these are some of the things they say they would do in the year 2012...2011-

“Produce six (6) Radio/TV Ads and one (1) jingle during 2nd and 3rd quarters”

What was done?

“A production company was contracted and is currently in the process of producing the TV and Radio ads”

In other words it was not done.

“Produce three (3) television programmes.”

What was done? It says:

“A television programme was produced...”

But it has not been aired yet; it was supposed to be aired in November 20-26. I do not know if it was done. It says further down:

“Host a national awards event by November 2011 to recognise the outstanding persons in the industry.” “Scheduled for November 22nd”

I do not know if it was done.

“Produce three (3) Newsletters.” “To date one (1) newsletter has been produced.”

So again, more than 50% incomplete.

“Conduct at least fifteen (15) visits to schools...”

Here they say eighteen (18) was done; so bravo!

“Conduct at least thirty (30) field trips to tourism sites...”

Fourteen (14) was done, under 50% performance; and you go through it, Mr. Speaker and you would see that there are other things, at page 551 something that I have raised in this Honourable House because it is important to Tourism:

“Identify and prepare project concepts for at least two (2) potential sites for development;”

And the two sites that were identified here were Fort Hamilton in Bequia and the Belmont Walk-way. Well I can tell you categorically nothing has been done; ‘cause people still falling down on the Belmont Walk-way and taxi drivers still apologizing to there...uhm customers as they bump along the road to try to get to the run down Fort Hamilton site.

So I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Transport and Works and the Honourable Minister of Tourism should get together and do something about the Fort Hamilton Site and at the same time fix the road that goes to the Fort Hamilton Site in Bequia. There was also, Mr. Speaker, perennial talk about assisting the Boat Boys or the so-called Boat Boys in the work that they do very important work but for years they have been asking for assistance and regularization of their profession, so that they can have training and respect that they deserve as people operating in the Tourism Industry. There was a trip that was sent in July of this year several of uhm...I think five of them were sent to St. Lucia to see what was happening there and I tell you a lot is happening in St. Lucia but nothing no follow up was done. I know because I spoke to people who went.

So Mr. Speaker, these things they do not make sense, their importance is not being here discussed in the House is what you do on the ground out there; and a lot of what is said here is not being done on the ground. Case in point at page 554 the Minister of Tourism says:-

“Continue to meet quarterly with the stakeholders in the yachting industry.”

Under the comment:

“The Ministry nonetheless held discussion with the yachting stakeholders at cruise subcommittee meetings. Additionally, the Honourable Minister of Tourism and Industry held several consultations with the stakeholders. These avenues provided a forum to discuss areas of concerns in the yachting sector...”

Yet Mr. Speaker, nothing was done about the security on the water which was the paramount issue that was raised by the people in that subsector in the economy. So talk, talk and nothing is done, talk is cheap, Mr. Speaker, action speaks louder than words. Speaker how much time do I have?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: seventeen (17) minutes.

DR. HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: seventeen (17) minutes thanks. Seventeen you said? Thirty? That is fine. Mr. Speaker, I am frustrated quite frankly with what is happening in Tourism because there seems to be no clear path forward. We are lurching from one thing to the next; the people in the Industry are complaining but no result. I see this year there is a projection for a 7.4% rise in arrivals in the yachting sector that is welcomed, Mr. Speaker, and I hope it is better by the end of the year when they have the full figures, but this must be placed in the context of a period during the last ten years when at least seven, possibly eight of those ten years we have had decline in the yachting arrival. So we are making up ground we have lost, we not going forward and we have a lot of ground to cover, Mr. Speaker, a lot to make up for. I see what is happening in our neighbouring country in St. Lucia, where they are rolling out the carpets for the yachties, Mr. Speaker, figuratively speaking of course and they are jumping at it, we here continue to twiddle our thumbs.

We have all the assets here, everybody would tell you that, yet why are we not doing better? We talk about the transformative potential of Tourism yet it remains unrealized. Even in the areas, where as the economist would say we have a comparative advantage that being yachting. We are losing ground, to destination, to places where the yachts go, they spend the night and then they come to the Tobago Cays, they enjoy themselves and then they go back. I say why cannot Admiralty Bay be the base for the cruisers so they can come and stay there as long as they like and then move on somewhere else and come back to their base here in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Why do we have to be penny pinching and niggling and pigging about \$35.00 that they have to pay here and giving you one month stay or three month stay in St. Lucia you go, you get six months, tax concessions...

[Interruption]

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Right so it should be better? It is a month now hooray! In St. Lucia it is six months.

[Interruption]

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: *ah right* you go. I would bring the paper to show.

Mr. Speaker, we have all the assets here, Mr. Speaker, they would tell you, we have in eco-tourism, in sailing, in diving and yet they remain unrealized but I leave more of that for budget debate. At the time when we are struggling to find our way I know it is well that the tourism authority which had a contribution of \$14 million last year, this year it is down to \$13 million and fortunately it is not disaggregated so we do not know how it is being spent by the Tourism Authority but I hope that most of it is being spent on promotional activity and not just on high salaries and perks for the senior executives.

Mr. Speaker, at page 571 there is a summary of the expectations of the Ministry for 2011 for the various categories of tourists so we would just look and see how they performed. The stay over visitors it was expected that in 2011 there would have been an increase of 3%; it increased according to their figures by 2.1%; it did not meet expectations but at least it is moving in the right direction. Stay over visitors a projected increase of 1% and there was a decline of 21.6% [Interjection]; same day visitors, sorry. Same day visitors, yes 21.6% decline. Yachting was projected to increase by 5% it is here saying that there was an increase of 7.4%; I have commented on that. Cruise tourism projected to increase by 5% declined by 16.2%. So, this is what I am saying Mr. Speaker that it has been very uneven, very unsatisfactory and really we need to do something more. There is nothing in the projections here that suggest that there is any urgency with respect to our spending about our policy and about how we intend to go about making this industry realize its potential.

And Mr. Speaker, when ... Mr. Speaker, the importance of these two categories (1) Stay over of course, you know who that is they stay in hotels, in guest houses and so on; that is very important because the per capita return would be high as compared with same day visitors and the yachting similarly it is well known that that sector that the per capita return from each visitor in the yachting sector is relatively high compared to other forms of tourism. So, these are areas, Mr. Speaker, where we ought to focus and try to improve. There is nothing here, Mr. Speaker that suggests if that is the case I will wait for the Budget of course, to comment about it more.

Mr. Speaker, I turn now briefly to make a few comments about the Ministry of Transport Works and Local Government. My colleague the Member for West Kingstown shadows this area for the Opposition but unfortunately he is not here so

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Five minutes.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: That is all I need. Mr. Speaker, this Ministry as you say does things that people can see so we can measure what it does, whether it fixes a road a bridge, repairs a building and so on we could see what it has done. And what we have seen, Mr. Speaker, is not very pleasant. At page 420 it says under the Result Indicators and I am just picking one and two items, Mr. Speaker because we do not have time to deal with them all; it says, second to last column on the left hand side:-

“Carry out through BRAGSA a comprehensive road clean, repair and rehabilitation programme and building repairs”.

and I see in the comments it says:-

“This is an ongoing exercise”.

And I think that is debatable, Mr. Speaker, because if you look you will see not much cleaning, I mean now around Christmas time there is some; but in some areas you know you would think that you are in somebody's backyard that you are driving because the bush is in your face, the

drains are full and the roads are cracked and broken. Mr. Speaker, here it says at page 425 you see the optimism of the Minister, he says:-

“Work with BRAGSA

This is for 2012, not having achieved it in 2011 or anywhere near it, 2012 he says:-

“Work with BRAGSA to repair 20,000 ft of asphalt road, 10,000 ft of concrete road 15,000 ft of feeder road by December 2012”.

Mr. Speaker, that is highly optimistic to use polite language and to tell you the way BRAGSA has functioned in the past, Mr. Speaker, you have heard my experience with the little piece of road in Friendship that if BRAGSA is doing all this road here, Mr. Speaker, there is nowhere ... in fact, if the people who built the pyramids in Egypt took the same approach as BRAGSA does to construction, they would still be building those things now. Because they take forever to get the slightest project done and in our case, Mr. Speaker, it is not because of a lack of haranguing the Minister and of bringing the issue here to this Honourable House, it is simply a lack of either funding or caring because they started that little piece of road in Friendship above the Sugar Apple Inn almost a year ago and it is still being constructed. So, I do not have much hope and I think that again the Minister is being unrealistic when he puts these things in the Estimate and just setting himself up for failure.

What I will applaud him for, Mr. Speaker, because although he is a bit in his approach on it, I see here the issue of the Cross-Country Road at pages 419 and 424 of the Estimates, it says at page 419 that they were going to finalise designs for the third phase of the Cross-Country Road and complete the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and that was said in the 2010 Estimates as well but nothing was done and I think it is being repeated here in the 2012 Estimates, yes, at page 424 it says, the project going forward into 2012 that you would finalize designs for the third phase of the Cross Country Road and complete the Environmental Impact Assessment, exactly the same words. But then, Mr. Speaker, in the Capital side of the Estimates at page 637, I see, I look for it midway down the page it says; “Cross Country Road”; there is no funding allocated to it just the nominal sum of \$10.00 and over in the remarks column it says:-

“This project is on hold”.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: All right gratis you will give your greetings: that is gratis.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. But Mr. Speaker, I in any event support the Minister in that because as you know, over the years we have asked them to revisit that and I know it is a little embarrassing of having put it in your manifesto and have trumpeted here in the House that you will be driving on it in 2005 but now that it is on hold, Mr. Speaker, the reality has caught up with the Minister and he is finally admitting in the same way that the Honourable Prime Minister said in the outset in his presentation that the fiscal situation of the country is caught and he has simply has to tailor his rhetoric and his policies to face the reality. Now, Mr. Speaker

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Greetings, greetings.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Thank you, I want to say two things, I was promised ... well, let me start with greetings. [Laughs] Mr. Speaker, there is ... it is the Christmas season and we all must try and reach out to our neighbours, our friends, and families and so on and even people who we do not always get along with to try and spread the Christmas cheer and to work together in these difficulty times. I want to wish all of my constituents and my colleagues here in this House, people in St Vincent and the Grenadines at home and at abroad happy season, wonderful Christmas and look forward to hopefully better things in the New Year. I know what to do to make it better, Mr. Speaker, and we will be presenting our ideas more and more to the people in that regard.

One of the things that is happening, Mr. Speaker, is that there is as committee that has come together to do a lighting up under the almond tree in Bequia and I want to invite everybody to come forward and to support it, bring lights, bring whatever you can to make it look pretty and come and spend some time and work on it. It is an open committee event and moreover when it started to come there is a permanent stage there for the whole season and whoever wishes to perform can come and perform; it is an open mike. So, it is an idea to have the whole community come together in a central place under the almond tree to enjoy Christmas; and I

know that a lot of people are excited about it, and it is not a competition so do not feel that you have to rehearse and practice just get together and come and support and enjoy the Christmas season.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, one of this event, it could have been done, you know the organizing of it in the Learning Resource Centre had it been built in the Northern Grenadines in 2011 as I was promised. And what I am disappointed about in this Estimate, Mr. Speaker, is that there is no provision here for the Learning Resource Centre, in the Northern Grenadines for 2012 and I hope that is a typographic error and that the Minister of Transport and Works would work feverishly to correct it. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for South Central Windward. You have 45 minutes to make your presentation and I think you are aware of that.

HONOURABLE SABOTO CAESAR: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, it is definitely an excellent opportunity to be here this afternoon debating such matters of National importance. December 13th last year polling stations around St Vincent and the Grenadines were going into their final hours and persons as we note by six o'clock on that evening we were certain of a victory for the Unity Labour Party and I know that the persons listening this evening that they are listening very carefully because they gave this mass political party a mandate and that is what we are here to discuss, the people's business and we are going to continue to produce in the excellent vein that we done in the past terms and it is on that basis that I know that we will be reelected for yet another term. [Applause] Mr. Speaker, if I may just walk you through my presentation a bit, I will begin by contextualizing within a global framework the figures that we are here to discuss then I will take us through item by item, the items for expenditure and then just before I give my greetings I will spend a bit of time shedding some light on the issue of the debt as discussed by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, it is now trite we all are fully aware of the global challenges which the entire world is facing today, what is happening in the euro zone, what is happening in North America particularly in the United States of America, the possibilities of having another recession in

2012 those discussions and circumstances would definitely bear heavily on our ability as a destination to harness these locations as traditional source markets and those are the realities. I did not hear it put in such a way by the Leader of the Opposition nor did I hear the Honourable member for the Northern Grenadines contextualize the economic crisis in a way to show that our main traditional source market the United States of America and Europe that they are going through extreme financial problems.

Mr. Speaker, it is in that vein taking into consideration the global challenges when you are drafting a budget for a small vulnerable economy tied so very closely to international capitalism that you have to be extremely careful, and extremely prudent during these times. Because what is happening you know is that as we sit here and debate these Estimates there are certain economic issues being discussed and addressed presently in the United States of America and in Europe that can have a significant impact on our circumstances and even though we may have certain numbers budgeted here today, certain things internationally can take place that can cause us to go back to the drawing board. That is the nature of economics, that is the nature of the world and things are changing and we have to change with the changing times.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn directly to the Ministry of Tourism and Industry and I must state, Mr. Speaker, that I am not here to go into the issues addressed about the Result Indicators those discussions are properly placed in January and I will go into those. But knowing the student that I am, I took my notes so I could prepare the answers for January, but right here now I am discussing the numbers. Mr. Speaker, the Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure for the Ministry of Tourism and Industry 2012; the Ministry is allocated \$17,896,852.00 and under the Estimates of Capital Expenditure for 2012 the Ministry is allocated \$9,476,010.00 allocated in total for expenditure \$27,372,862.00 which is 3.4% of the total budget and this Mr. Speaker is outlined at Roman numeral iii at the summary of total expenditure.

Mr. Speaker, I will now detail how the estimated expenditure for 2012 was allocated item by item. And I think that when someone is listening to us carefully you will realize that if you use your time now to discuss the Indicators which should be properly discussed in January then you do not give the general public an understanding of how the detailed allocations in the Estimates are done and your debate is totally out of sync with what is being discussed. Mr. Speaker, I begin on the Capital side page 648 Project No. 901003 the - National Signage Project \$56,000

was allocated to this project and Mr. Speaker, the main reason for this project is as we enhance our destination we have to ensure that we meet certain international standards. You do not want a guest who rents a vehicle and he has to stop at every shop he meets to find out whether or not he is in Biabou or if he is in Georgetown. And this would be a significant benefit that we will obtain by executing this project in 2012, the National Signage Project.

No. 901001- Access Roads to Tourism Sites \$680,000 was allocated and Mr. Speaker, when someone comes off of a cruise ship a five star and you are going to a prize destination we have to ensure that the comfort is looked after and that is why we have allocated \$680,000 to begin to address some of the problems we are facing on some of the roads leading towards the tourism sites. Project No. 900802 -The National Heritage Project \$250,000; Project No. 900804 – The Tourism and Private Sector Development Project and if I may just state briefly, Mr. Speaker, this is for the construction of the Maritime and Hospitality Institute and this will bring about a significant avenue and opportunity for us to train a large percentage and cadre of our labour force who will eventually come and work in the tourism sector not only in St Vincent and the Grenadines but also regionally and internationally and this I will delve in further during the debates in January.

Mr. Speaker, \$540,000 was allocated to Project No. 900402 the Tourism Development Project No. 2. On the Capital side, Mr. Speaker, Capital Expenditure Grants estimated for 2012 item by item (1) 901001 – the Rehabilitation of Access Roads to Trinity Falls and to Vermont Nature Trail - \$250,000 and work is ongoing, I visited the area up to last week and I know that the persons the Tour Guides, the Taxi men are all proud because it will definitely make it much easier for them to conduct their tours. \$6.7 million under Project No. 900804/900801 RABACCA National Parks the approval is still at Cabinet and that is why you notice there the nominal sum of only \$10.00. Mr. Speaker, that gives a Capital Expenditure from local loans of \$2.5 million and \$6.9 for Capital Expenditure from Grants.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to the details of the Estimates of Expenditure of the summary by programmes 2012 and programme No. 900, General Administration a sum is allocated; No. 91 for Tourism Administration; No. 909 for National Parks and I must say the sums allocated there for National Parks we have to see how best we can do with it because a lot of the sites were damaged during the passage of hurricane Tomas. The site for example at Black Point, we have

significant work to do at the entrance and recently we experienced a period of heavy rains and the site at RAWACOU the fencing was also damaged and these are things that we will be addressing. The Tourism authority the allocation is there, No. 911; No. 915, Industry; No. 955, The Bureau of Standards; and No. 960, The Center for Enterprise Development. And I just want to note that there would be a significant refocusing by CED the (Center for Enterprise Development) during the New Year we will be focusing on the two main productive sectors: agriculture and tourism because we want to ensure that during the next twelve months that we see an increase in entrepreneurship for persons who are within the agriculture and tourism sectors.

Mr. Speaker, I listened quite carefully to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition and what struck me most; that is after the Honourable Leader of the Opposition would have laid his very broad context when he went on to the discussion of the debt and these are his words, Mr. Speaker, and I quote:-

“Lack of performance of the government is why there is a deficit not because of the international community crisis or bad weather”

And the Honourable Leader went on to note:-

“St Lucia faced Tomas but they have gone back to growth”.

Those were your words. Mr. Speaker, I just want to note a few things because in recent times I have been able through my travels to St Lucia to do a bit of studies as to how their economy is going. And Mr. Speaker, between the period where the Honourable Leader of the Opposition made the statement and 2:00 o'clock I went and I did my research and this is what my research brings to bear. Yes, St Lucia faced Tomas but today Soufriere, Fond Saint Jacques and Bexon, the recovery efforts are only 20%. A family, which perished or never recovered; houses are still under mud; most persons living in Soufriere affected, they have not been able to return home and are living by their families; \$30 million is needed by WASCO, [Interjection] yes, you will get your time to speak [striking gavel on desk] Mr. Speaker, can I continue?

HONOURABLE SABOTO CAESAR: Thirty million dollars is needed by WASCO, WASCO is the water and Sewerage Company not only that but income support in agriculture was promised by the former administration and I want the persons who are listening whether by television or following by internet to understand the point that I am making very carefully. When the Honourable Leader of the Opposition comes here to parliament And he says in his debate on the issue of the debt and he drew the reference between St Vincent and the Grenadines and St Lucia what he did not go on to say is that many of the things done in St Vincent and the Grenadines by this Unity Labour party government were never done by the UWP in St Lucia and that is one of the main reasons I believe why they are in Opposition today and the St Lucia Labour Party is in government. [Applause]

In agriculture Mr. Speaker, in agriculture

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: [Striking the gavel] Honourable Member, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition is moving on a Motion.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Mr. Speaker, I understand the enthusiasm of youth, I simply wish to say that I was making my point in relation to the fact that despite similar difficulties St Lucia has already returned to growth; that was the point I was making.

HONOURABLE SABOTO CAESAR: Mr. Speaker, let us take the point raised by the Leader of the Opposition as his best and let me state what he said again, I did not make this up you know, I quote the Honourable Leader of the Opposition again, he noted:-

“The lack of performance of the government,

Referring to the government of St Vincent and the Grenadines,

“Is why there is a deficit, not because of the international community financial crisis or bad weather, St Lucia faced Tomas but they have gone back to growth”.

Yes: they have gone back to growth but I am telling you that the reason we are still facing challenges is because of our heavy expenditure on our recovery efforts, also not only in agriculture but in housing and social services you see, which were not done in St. Lucia.

Agriculture, Mr. Speaker, income support was promised in St Lucia, no income support was ever received by a single farmer in St Lucia. So when you speak about debt and deficit in St Vincent and the Grenadines at least we know where the money is going. The road works in Dennery and Maicoud they have only properly been started after being assessed last week, over one year after the passage of Tomas.

It was the Honourable Leader of the Opposition who noted after the passage of Tomas that the Honourable Prime Minister overstated the damage that Tomas caused to agriculture that is a fact, you noted that and it is because of that that significant sums were placed to target the recovery efforts and those amounts are the expenditure that we are here discussing and would continue to discuss [Knocking on the desk]. Mr. Speaker, it is easy you know, it is easy to talk about balancing and prudence and trying to throw smoke in people's eyes comparing St Vincent and the Grenadines with St Lucia in a way that it pleases an argument.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: [Striking the gavel] Honourable Member, could I get some quiet while the Honourable Member makes his presentation. I could understand that you may at some point do a little taunting but let us do it in moderation and I think continuous going on [inaudible] but let us stop because there are some people who object vigorously when it is there time, so please let us stop it.

HONOURABLE SABOTO CAESAR: Mr. Speaker, within the circumstances that we are facing internationally, I am very pleased with the sums allocated for tourism. Currently we are in a process of developing a very unique way that we can continue to market our destination which will be significantly cost cutting and I have discussed this with other Ministers and stakeholders and in this arena today we have to be extremely innovative and creative. Because the Honourable Leader of the Opposition would agree that what is happening internationally is definitely going to take a significant turn on our tourism receipts whether it is in stay overs, yachting, same day or the cruise sector.

Mr. Speaker, with that being said, I look forward to the debates in January where I would go through the different indicators and I would provide the explanations as to why in certain areas certain items are not yet completed and that would be dealt with at that time.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take the opportunity now to send best regards and wishes to the people of South Central Windward and I say this knowing that we are an extremely hard working people and that this Christmas we are putting all the plans in place to have a blessed season. I am going to celebrate this evening because it is a moment of celebration and I am certain that the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines and South Central Windward would stand to benefit from the debates that would have taken place here this afternoon. I am obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Further debate? Any further debate, Honourable Senator [Inaudible] Honourable Member, if we are really debating let us get up and debate because the Prime Minister not being here does not tie my hand. I can suspend the session and await his wrapping up I can do that; so I am not trying to [inaudible] but let us not waste time it is Christmas. [Interjection] Everybody, I am talking to everybody, I am talking to the Members of the House, I am not addressing any particular person. Honourable Senator.

HONOURABLE VYNETTE FREDERICK: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to add my voice to this debate on the Estimates today December 13th. Let me start by speaking specifically to one or two comments that were just made by the Honourable Member for South Central Windward and I am of course subject to correction but my appreciation for his approaching the context in which these Estimates are to be debated or to be looked at is that we must have regard for what the global financial situation is. Nobody is saying not to have regard for the global financial situation. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, the globe has come to us in the form of the IMF, the globe is right here knocking on the doors of St Vincent and the Grenadines speaking with all of us particularly this year to look at our local situation and to make decisions on how we relieve the impact that not only external shocks have had [Interjection] I am glad you know that; I am glad you know that [Striking of gavel] this year in particular they have come and they are asking St Vincent and the Grenadines Government some hard questions to tackle and that must be why, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Minister did not speak to that fact when he debated the Estimates this morning.

But let me join with the Leader of the Opposition in speaking to the reality because it may be all well and good for us to come into this House and take up our political positions and throw old

talk back and forth across the Aisle but there are Vincentians out there for whom this year has been most difficult, Mr. Speaker. [Knocking on desk] There are people who will find every parliamentarian in here and express their difficulties with making their ends meet and it is in that context that we are answerable to them before anybody else, Mr. Speaker, it is really how these Estimates relate to the bread and butter issues for Vincentians that matters for them and not whether a remark to and fro is made in this House to score a political point. This is people's livelihood we are talking about and we all know it. So, if we can look at what is being presented as the Estimates this year with a view to seeing what it gives by way of hope to Vincentians then we will be doing a service to the people of this country who have required all of us here present to look to the state of affairs which is being expressed in this document of six hundred and eighty something pages.

So, it is in that context that I begin my debate with just outlining. To me, Mr. Speaker, and indeed to other persons who are paying attention to the Estimates; debate was not something that you would normally do; to say that this is what this debate is supposed to be about is the country's money, how it is being spent and where the priorities are being placed and whether the decisions that are being taken with how we spend the country's money will be decisions that bring relief to the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines as they deal with the slings and arrows of the global situation of the absence of prudence on the part of the Government and the reality in which we find ourselves as a nation, economically as a consequence of the actions of the government.

The Government cannot side step its responsibility for the position in which St Vincent and the Grenadines now finds itself and just throw the ball into the court of the world. Indeed, the fact that the IMF projects St Vincent as being what is it? The only country not to return to growth for next year; we will still be experiencing negative growth when the thirty one other countries that they profiled including Latin America and other Caribbean countries would have returned to growth. Why is that? Because it must be that they are stimulating their economy, because they are stimulating productive sectors of the economy [Knocking of desk] but where in this document can we see stimulus? Where in this document can we see the plan of action by the Minister of Finance to return to growth of 2%? As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, and if you permit me I will refer to a note that was made; a note I made of what the Prime Minister said last year around this time. He said that the Capital Budget was smaller because of prudence and

enterprise. He said that last year, this year he said, “The Estimates are fit for the times combining prudence and enterprise”.

So, those words are not the words of the Leader of the Opposition, those are the words of the Minister of Finance who believes that these Estimates for 2012 with projections for 2013 and 2014 are fit for where we are at today in St Vincent and the Grenadines. That they offer some hope but I have looked, and indeed his own tone this morning his own presentation says to me and to every discerning Vincentians that all is not well in St Vincent and the Grenadines and he realizes it. And therefore, as a consequence of that it is irresponsible of those who speak after him on his side to deviate from that tone which he has set. What was pointed by the Leader of the Opposition this morning which cannot be underscored enough is the fact that the IMF has congratulated the Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines on its intention to do several things to avoid external borrowing, to implement market based property taxes, to limit transfers to state owned enterprises and to contain the public sector wage bill.

One would have thought that these Estimates could be read in such a way to see where changes would be happening to take into consideration the fact that the IMF expects the government to go by its undertaking but this is not the document we have. The document we have varies so little from what was presented this same time last year as to be almost indistinguishable and to me, Mr. Speaker, as a young Member of parliament I view this with a certain degree of apprehension, because, Mr. Speaker, it says to me that the Government appears unwilling to bite the bullet and accept responsibility for the actions that they took to lead us down this path. [Knocking on desk] And Mr. Speaker, you must forgive us for insisting that it goes on record that the Government must take responsibility because they have in the Minister of Finance a fantastic orator who waxes poetic leaving for the consumption of the Vincentian public lovely catch phrases “cusps of economic take off” we are reaping the harvest and what you do is you prime people up, you raise their expectations and when it is dashed when their hopes are dashed by their reality, Mr. Speaker, they do not view amusement or any sense of hope coming into this parliament and asking them simply to accept that this is the best we can do for now.

Mr. Speaker, now I have the responsibility of shadowing the Ministry of actually Information Technology Science and Technology and Culture and what I find interested about these two areas, two sectors, two Ministries different portfolios is that I find in them, Mr. Speaker,

Honourable Members, great opportunities and great potentials. What I find is hard to take is when you hear words like transformation being again touted by the Minister of Finance in speaking about information technology and its power to create growth. You have here the understanding that information technology presents the fantastic opportunity to transform and grow the economy but when you look to the Estimates, you cannot see a coherent approach to how this is supposed to happen, I appreciate and as someone who is technologically savvy I appreciate that maybe everything cannot happen in sequence but surely there must be a method to the madness that we can appreciate us saying information technology is poised to pull St Vincent out. And we on this side believe that it is one of the areas if developed properly that could provide growth in St Vincent and the Grenadines. We really believe so, but do we see in these Estimates the idea that we are creating E-entrepreneurs or just simply a generation of end users?

And I will get into it when we get into the substance of the result indicators in January because I am not convinced that the strategic approach to IT or any strategic approach to IT is fully appreciated by those who are the decision makers in deciding where to put their money to create a favourable outcome for the people in St Vincent and the Grenadines who would take this sector and run with it and become financially independent as E-entrepreneurs through information technology, I do not see it happening. Again, I look at culture and culture has six result indicators; six result indicators: culture and the development of the creative cultural industry something that since 2007 was being investigated, why? Because of its potential to create growth by letting people independently earn from their own capacity as cultural practitioners, Mr. Speaker, that was the thinking and a lot of money went in to figure out how it must be done.

There is a policy document, Mr. Speaker, and we see culture regulated in these Estimates to being sort of throw away add on, on page 181 of the Estimates. It is mentioned last and it is not even contemplated in the Mission Statement, Mr. Speaker, and that is such a vast departure from what pertained even five years ago. And so how do we accept these Estimates as really representing the Government's plan for providing hope to Vincentians? How do we accept that this is a rehash largely of last year's Estimates and a trimming down of areas where you would think that to be bold we would look to go in a direction where we empower our human resources to pull us out. I do not see it happening, Mr. Speaker, and it concerns me greatly

because, Mr. Speaker, I am a Vincentian and I listen to Vincentians and I know we all do in here and part of being in here in this particular climate, Mr. Speaker, you yourself would not get away from people coming to say, “This is how I feel, this is what I am facing” you know.

So, when I see a document like this, Mr. Speaker, I hold onto it because it would guide what I say from this side of the aisle to people who come looking for hope. Now, Mr. Speaker, you know, I want to speak to you about this situation in IT where infrastructurally things are happening I would not doubt it; I understand it; I see it but there seems to be a reluctance to move from traditional networking, bills, looking at the backbone of government. I appreciate that has to happen, sure, but that is all well and good to create the capacity in IT: I understand that. But if we don’t push mobile technology and the stakeholders in mobile technology towards more act based value added services you know, instead of being comfortable with people paying phone rates and paying to access the internet then, Mr. Speaker, we have an opportunity that we are letting fall apart, we are letting it ... we are leaving it unrealized and that is just not acceptable if we are to do what we must to pull St Vincent out of the doldrums. And there is no question based on all that has been said today; there is no question that we are in the doldrums, you just have to ask anyone on the streets. You just have to look at Kingstown in the heart of Christmas to see that the reality is all is not well.

Now, we have \$100 million deficit on the Recurrent Expenditure which the Government is projecting to erase by collecting \$100 million through Other Receipts, Other Receipts. What are Other Receipts, Mr. Speaker? If you look at Roman numeral xii, Other Receipts are described as Capital Receipts from domestic sources not elsewhere classified; Capital Receipts from domestic sources not elsewhere classified. Mr. Speaker, to my mind that is a fancy way of saying miscellaneous; so, basically you do not know and much like this is a rehash of last year’s budget Estimates. Don’t expect the comments to deviate much from what we said last year. Now, why is this upsetting to me, Mr. Speaker, that I am to accept that the Government will raise \$100 million through Other Receipts because historically the Government has never raised more than three point million dollars through Other Receipts but apparently, I am to take faith in the fact that next year they hope to realize \$100 million. Is this to be believed? Mr. Speaker, I want to believe it but I cannot because the evidence tells me that I cannot put my eggs in that basket and expect that some balancing, which the Prime Minister is talking about you know, he says, “We are balancing”. Sometimes he says, “We have to look for the space in between”. I

listen to him, you know, he has a way with words he should be a poet. But when you give me a nice word to hold on to, I cannot eat that; I cannot eat your words, I cannot send children to school with platitudes and rhetoric, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you know, if the Gallery holds on to you, it means that you are hitting them hard [Interjection by audience in the Gallery] right. They just identified themselves, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Yea! Yea! Honourable Member

HONOURABLE VYNETTE FREDERICK: I withdraw my sentiments, Mr. Speaker,

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Please, please.

HONOURABLE VYNETTE FREDERICK: Surely.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: And

HONOURABLE VYNETTE FREDERICK: We have been going well.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Seek to control yourselves in these matters.

HONOURABLE VYNETTE FREDERICK: We have been going well, Mr. Speaker, very well.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: All right, thank you.

HONOURABLE VYNETTE FREDERICK: Very well. [Interjection]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Neither did I, [inaudible] but after somebody boots cannot fit them, somebody shoes cannot fit them [Laughter]

HONOURABLE VYNETTE FREDERICK: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I do not want to rob you of your time.

HONOURABLE VYNETTE FREDERICK: I appreciate you don't want me to

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I said, just a minute I do not want to rob you of your time.

HONOURABLE VYNETTE FREDERICK: Indeed, very well.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: She has identified who she is the [inaudible]. Thank you very much; all right continue.

HONOURABLE VYNETTE FREDERICK: Mr. Speaker, so what are we seeing in these Estimates that leads me to conclude that I cannot hold on to them for any hope? Mr. Speaker, based on the Estimates and you will take a look at the Financial Summary that was provided as an insert, I believe that there were one and two corrections so that it is inserted to replace what was actually in the bound document. For my appreciation of what is happening to Other Transfers, the approved Estimates had Other Transfers at \$113 million for 2011, and we are to expect that \$103 plus and permit me please, Mr. Speaker, to deviate with going into the \$887,083 to say that less money would be spent on Other Transfers. Now, I look forward to hearing whether this will translate into ... because we cannot tell from these Estimates, whether this means that BRAGSA will not be properly able to carry out its work, whether the Tourism Authority would not be properly able to carry out its work, whether our students who attend the University of the West Indies who are assisted to do so, and our students who attend the A Level College and are assisted to do so will suffer. Because Mr. Speaker, we have heard of embarrassing situations where students have been in a panic prior to examinations and that is our scholarship students. Mr. Speaker, I am not speaking from what they say, I am speaking from those who have spoken to me about their own difficulties.

And so, when I look at the Financial Summary and I look at what was not really mentioned the fact that they are to earn \$100 million from Other Receipts and the fact that we cannot see or we will see less money being provided for Other Transfers which is where work actually gets done and people actually feel a financial benefit through receiving scholarship funding and BRAGSA being able to do its thing, and the Tourism Authority being able to function. Mr. Speaker, you will appreciate that this does not make me rest easy in this festive season. Indeed, Mr. Speaker,

it is a serious situation that we face and glossing it over at a time like this does not solve anybody purpose, so there is a responsibility on the part of the Government not only to accept its role in putting us in this situation but to accept its role in articulating the way out. So, I for one would not be holding on to these Estimates as being reflective of the plan of action for the way out. I will await the words of the Minister of Finance who got us into the problem and I will await his plan of action to get us out of the problem. And indeed, Mr. Speaker, let me take this opportunity to say one sentence which I believe characterizes where we are; characterizes how we came to be placed in this position and I look forward to hearing how we will be taken out of it.

Last year's Budget was never sustainable it was all talk, let me wish everyone here all the best for the season, I take it that those dressed in red are in the Spirit of the season particularly, and I [laughs] want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas ahead of time, I don't think that I would see you but let me leave you in the Spirit of Christmas by saying:

*“Hark the herald angels sing,
Rice and peas is just the thing
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
Eat it raw or let it boil.”*

That is Vincy Christmas. Have a good Christmas. Mr. Speaker, I am obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Further debate? Honourable Member for Southern Grenadines. All right the Honourable Leader has some urgent matters to attend to and has asked for an excuse and I think the Honourable Member for the Northern Grenadines will take very soon his departure. [Interjection] Eh! The Leader of the Opposition. Honourable Member.

HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE: Mr. Speaker, I too rise to make my contribution to the debate of the Estimates of 2012. I have listened to the various Speakers who have gone before me and I heard how they all spoke of the importance of the Estimates to the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines in light of our economic situation, or should I say the economic situation the world over and the need of our government, this government for prudent management. Mr. Speaker, the average man on the street would be listening more intently to

find out how these Estimates affect their daily lives. They would be listening to find out what measures or what initiatives have been put in place or have been implemented by the Government to stabilize our economy to bring about growth and development. Mr. Speaker, they would be also listening to find out how the measures put in place would seek to lessen the hardship that faces each citizen on a daily basis. For the average man on the street, Mr. Speaker, these Estimate speaks to the bread and butter issues. Mr. Speaker, can we really say that the 2012 Estimates present a sustainable plan to take the country forward; to stimulate our economy and to bring about growth and development in St Vincent and the Grenadines?

What does the 2012 Estimates mean to us? Will things be better in St Vincent and the Grenadines? Will it get worst in 2012 or would we continue along the same line or the same trend that we have been going for the past four or so years. Mr. Speaker, as indicated by the Leader of the Opposition economically we are in a negative position and we attribute this to the lack of performance by this government. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Prime Minister has indicated that the major sectors within the country have been allocated monies which seek to run the operation of these various ministries but Mr. Speaker, it is important that we analyse the money, we take a meticulous look, view of what has been presented in each ministry in order to help our citizens understand what the Budget entails for them. And each of us has our responsibilities with the Ministry that we shadow and it is our responsibility then to point out the deficiencies or sometimes we do not always look negatively at what has been presented, but in this House we on this side of the House has always been positive to point out the things that we thought would bring growth and development within this country. Mr. Speaker and it is because of those reasons that I would be looking at my debate for today one or two important sectors in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Honourable Prime Minister indicated that education accounts for \$25 million or 15.4% of the Capital Budget or the Capital Estimates. This represents a decline of approximately somewhere in the region of \$5 million. The Honourable prime Minister alluded to the fact that this is so because most of the major projects within the sector have been completed, Mr. Speaker and he pointed to what he terms that we would be taking or they would be taking education to the next level. And in pointing that out he mentioned some of the key areas which are essential in doing so. Some of them would include access, the teacher's learning environment, addressing quality and the output that is the end result that we get out of all the measures, initiatives and the monies that would be spent within the sector.

First of all Mr. Speaker, I would like to look at one of the key areas which was pointed out under this section and it has to do with access. And in order to do so, Mr. Speaker, I must point to the indicators, looking at the results because it is very important that we do that, because it is within the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure that points the programme and plans of the Government and it also points how they hope to achieve that and it is important that we point out so that our people would get a clear understanding of what the Estimates is all about.

Mr. Speaker, Access. We talk about education many of us have heard the term it is for living and for production. The Prime Minister said \$28.5 million is allocated, we have no quarrel with that what we are speaking about is the areas of priority where the money is to be spent, Mr. Speaker, so when we talk about education we talk about it in the sense of putting a dent on poverty, alleviating poverty giving the poor the Opportunity in order to improve their standard of living, those are some of the things which we are speaking about when we are talking about education. Some people would look at the big projects like building schools and all of that which is very important and we need to do that, but after doing that we need to spend ... put greater emphasis on the things that would seek to improve what we have built and what we have put in place. Mr. Speaker, on page 229 of the Estimates, it talks about create an access fund for needy parents and that is why I looked at it under Access and the Indicator says: "Not done. Referrals are made to Ministry of National Mobilisation for support". But, Mr. Speaker, if we are serious in helping the poor people of this country to move forward, this is another goal to create an access fund for needy parents because every year, Mr. Speaker, we have the situation where a number of parents who are not working have to rely on people within their communities in order to help them. I know that when you look at social welfare services that they cannot do it all, but Mr. Speaker, if we have a fund that will make sure that students or children of needy parents, they are supplied with the necessary tools to go to school then it would ensure that the lives of our citizens are better, those children would have the opportunity to attend school on a regular basis thereby improving their lot, Mr. Speaker. [Knocking desk]

You know, when you look at education, to me there is a great divide between what exists in the rural areas and what exists in the urban areas. You find it that we talk about access but when you look at some communities the much work that can be done in order to bring them up to a level so that the whole country can be on the same playing field.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, I hear the parliamentary representative for the Southern Grenadines, he is lamenting that this is absent from the Capital Budget

[interjection] that is what he said. He said, “\$28.5 million is being spent in the Capital Budget” and he lamented how the percentage has fallen down and that where are the areas of priority. And then he goes on to speak on these matters where we can help out students and parents but those are Recurrent Expenditure not Capital Expenditure, so if he wishes to shift to the Recurrent Expenditure fine, I do not have any problem with his presentation.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: That’s right linking it with the Capital Expenditure, continue. [Interjection]

HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE: Mr. Speaker, all I am pointing out, Mr. Speaker, in terms of access the Prime Minister alluded to the fact this morning that there are some areas which will take precedent and one of the things that he mentioned is access and I am just pointing out that within the Estimates that provisions were made to create an access fund for needy students and the Indicator said that this was not done and that referrals were made to a particular Ministry and I am saying there is a need.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Elucidation, the Honourable Member is speaking towards the Result Indicators for last Budget, for the last Estimates. He said it was not done we are speaking here on the Estimates for 2012, so if you are telling me that the Prime Minister... it should have been provided and it was not provided, he is reading from the Result Indicators of the 2011 Budget and the 2011 Estimates. We are speaking here on the 2012 Estimates.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, could you move on and...

HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: In terms of the...

HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE: Thank you, Sir. Also in terms of access within the 2012 Estimates provisions have been made to work towards the decentralization of the Ministry of Education, Mr. Speaker. And I think that it is important for us to improve access that this particular initiative be implemented, Mr. Speaker. He also spoke of teaching-learning environment and within the Indicators last year, Mr. Speaker, on page 228, I just want to point out that:-

“Education Officers continue to highlight the need for sustained high quality teaching-learning environment during their routine visits”.

Mr. Speaker, we have a situation at the Union Island Secondary School, I have not seen in the Capital Estimates where a sum has been provided for corrective methods or maybe it is somewhere in there. But where you have a situation, we are talking about providing a proper teaching-learning environment that is safe and you know, conducive to learning and teaching. But you have where at this school you have a dog touched the outside unit, Mr. Speaker, of the air-conditioned unit and what has happened is that it was electrocuted the children spoke about seeing smoke and all this kind of things and that the dog was completely dead. Some people say barbecue whatever, it was dead, dead [interjection] all right it was dead. You also have a hazard, Mr. Speaker, in that a large section of the school you had caution tapes all over, children talked about having entering the entrance and touching the iron railings and things like that and being shocked.

Mr. Speaker, you have where in a lab when you plug in something one area it blows out in the Tuck Shop and other places like that. You have one section of the Lab current is there and the other section it is not there. A lot of students faced difficulty last year, Mr. Speaker, doing the subject EDPM they took a very long time.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, I am familiar with what the Member is speaking on just to elucidate. The matter in the Union Island Secondary School was an unfortunate incident there is a row of plugs in the auditorium below the platform and the water coming down the staircase in the school from the upper floor ran over, was continuously running over. So, when there is a heavy rain initially it had a waterproof plug on it and that got broken off the water was coming over and eventually the positive touched unto the - what you call the ground; and that I am advised will not trip the circuit breaker and that was the cause of it. The complaint was there for two days and they closed the school, the Honourable Minister of Education authorized it and the electrical inspectorate went down and a report has been written on it and those plugs will be removed and replaced. And in fact, there is a new electrical regulation that should come in place for a different type of trip breaker that way you can have a trip on the circuit breaker from positive to ground. So, that it is an unfortunate situation, fortunately no human being died and it could have caused much more but quick response from the electrician and the electrical inspectorate the matter was resolved. Those plugs have now been killed I am advised and will be redesigned.

HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE: Yes, Mr. Speaker, but also to indicate, Mr. Speaker, I understand what the Honourable Minister said but since the school was opened they have been having problems at the Lab, you plug something here it blows out at the other end and all these things have been going on at the school since it has opened and they have said to me that complaints were made to the relevant Ministries, I do not know who did or when and where, but Mr. Speaker, I, when the school was opened we heard about the-state-of-the- art new school and it is something to a university campus and things like that. So, if we are doing that, Mr. Speaker, then these kinds of problems that exist there should not have existed there in the first place, Mr. Speaker. I know sometimes things can happen but there are simple things that affect the daily operations of our children in school that affect the teaching-learning process and these problems must be solved, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know the Canouan issue has been debated much and I know sometime next week it will be the cause of further debate in terms of building a secondary school in Canouan the matter has been addressed by the residence there. They are the people, they are the ones who are calling for it, they have been calling for it, Mr. Speaker, and it is only fair that we listen and we address the problems of the people because after all that is what we are here for.

Mr. Speaker, on page 620 it speaks about the book loan scheme and the allocation of, I think it is, \$1 million, 620 Book Loan Scheme Phase 2 - to provide text books for schools. Mr. Speaker, within the last school year and even before that we have heard where parents, students have been complaining about not being able to get the required number of books under the scheme. Sometimes you pay the fee and at times you get two or three books and parents have to purchase the rest sometimes in excess of \$300 plus, that is a fact, because a number of parents have complained to me. A number of them have said, "These are the books I have received"; sometimes through the school you get a list of what you can get and what you have to buy. When you look at the current situation within our country, a number of persons they are not working and I frankly, we on this side of the House, we think that \$1 million does not go far enough to address the current problem under the Book Loan Scheme Programme and that there is a need to provide more funds in order to help our children, the young people of St Vincent and the Grenadines, greater priority should be given in this area to ensure that our children have the necessary tools when they attend school, Mr. Speaker.

And we noticed that the Book Loan Scheme exists only at the secondary level. At the primary level parents accept their responsibility and they do what they have to do and at the secondary

level the assistance that is given is greatly appreciated, it is just that all we are saying is that greater priority should be given to the Book Loan Scheme: more money should be given so that the children would receive the necessary resources when they are heading out for school, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the School Feeding Programme I know we have debated this issue over and over, over the past years various solutions have been given but when you look at page 266, I see that in terms of Supplies and Materials that there is a reduction, in 2011 you had \$1,850,000 but now in 2012 \$1,572,000. So, I am asking when I look at one of the Indicators, which is on page 227 it talks about:-

“Improve the quality of Early Childhood Education through an integrated health and social development programme”.

It is also within the 2012 Indicator, so I am asking do you think that this would be enough considering all we want to do within the school feeding programme with the reduction. Cutting the cost of the school feeding programme would that be enough to take care of the nutritional needs of our children who are going to school. Mr. Speaker, I remember just during this term I visited one of the schools within my constituency and while I was there during the lunch hour the principal and another teacher approached me asking if I can help to provide funds to provide lunch for one of the young students. When I questioned the child, the child said, “Mommy said, there is nothing home, so do not come home”. So, I am just showing you, Mr. Speaker, the School Feeding Programme, the meals had finished and sometimes you come across situations like these where you have to provide and assist, so it is important that we look at the programme, assess it, look at the needy children within the school because some years I must also say that within this Honourable House we were asked to contribute 5% of our salaries because it was said that because it had economic hard times and things like this. And the 5% of my salary still goes to a particular school in the Southern Grenadines to assist with the School Feeding Programme [Striking on desk] [Interjection] you understand, Mr. Speaker. So, do not ask if I gave them a \$10.00 I continually contribute to the schools within the Southern Grenadines to make sure things work as smoothly as possible to assist parents and students with the need of having to gain education – proper education, quality education, because it is very important that we do so.

Sometimes people may think that the work... I am not saying that the work is government alone but we all have a part to play within the development of our country and that is why we are elected as representatives and as representatives we also have to find a way to take care of people within our constituency [Striking on desk] Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House have been making sure that we take our responsibility seriously and work towards the benefit of people that we represent in the various constituencies, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, this is one area, the area of the School Feeding Programme we know of how students, you know as a young teacher sometimes I am teaching and you see children with their head on the desk and when you question them you find out the problems that they have and most of these problems are related to nutritional issues, so that is why it is important for me to point out this area in terms of the monies that are allocated and to ask if you think that there is enough, cutting it would it be enough in light of our current economic situations and some of the plight that our parents face on a daily basis in order to send their children to school.

Mr. Speaker, on that note I wish to say that sometime next year in the debate on the budget a lot of these issues will be dealt ... addressing the quality, I know over the years I have been calling for development programmes to be done at school, development of teachers especially those who are new to the system. I see that attempts are being made to deal with that and it is important that we do so if we seriously want to address the results, the end results of our students, of our children in schools. Because that is one of the essential goals that we are looking for when you talk about education it is to ensure that our students are successful at the end of the school year, regardless of what form they are in. We are looking at Early Childhood Education, it is an important area and in order to ensure that the right foundation is set that it is built so when students reach primary they will be able to progress throughout the journey of the education system. I also see where funds have been allocated in terms of trying to get out skilled people certified, it is important that we do so and not only that to provide the programme where our young people will be able to get a skill so they will be able to find employment throughout St Vincent and the Grenadines or within the wider region.

I have always lamented of the fact that sometimes you see a number of young people on the block liming but even within the Southern Grenadines there are a number of programmes that can be done in the tourism sector in order to provide them with the skills that are necessary so that they will find themselves off the block and be occupied meaningfully in order to make better lives for themselves, for their families and also to make a better community, Mr. Speaker.

On that note I wish to say season greetings to all the Members of this Honourable House, those on the Government side and those on the ... my colleagues on this side also to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the Clerk of the House and your staff to wish you all the best for 2012 and also to say to the people of the Southern Grenadines: Canouan, Mayreau and Union Island that I hope that you ... we have a very good Christmas down there. I know a lot of people travel from far and wide sometimes, Mr. Speaker, to come to St Vincent and the Grenadines and in particular the Grenadines because they like our style of Christmas. Last was it on Sunday night, there was a programme a live programme at the Hugh Mulzac Square with Father Roach and a number of the locals and the Catholic Community and people were encouraged to sing carols and to get into the festive mood. I was one of those who participated, I even did a song: "How can I spend Christmas without you"; because it would be very hard for me to spend Christmas without the people of the Southern Grenadines who I thank very much for their support. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Further debate, Honourable Member, oh sorry! Go ahead talk.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker. I too wish to say my two cents on this Estimates for 2012, I want to agree with my colleague the Member for the Southern Grenadines asking the question with regards to the importance of these Estimates for the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines. And when we come into this Honourable House to debate the Estimates our constituents out there from the various constituencies they are listening and they want to hear from us what is in store for them in terms of what these Estimates - what benefits they as a people are expected to achieve or to get from these Estimates. We have to look at these Estimates, Mr. Speaker, in a manner that our people, the ordinary man and woman our people out there can understand. Those who have to grapple with a mountain of bills and to juggle them sometimes you pay one this month; you pay one next month and so on and you want to see if these Estimates will go anywhere in helping you as a person in trying to make ends meet; trying to send your children to school on a daily basis. I speak from a constituency, Mr. Speaker, where quite a number of students travel on a daily basis to Kingstown and these Estimates, Mr. Speaker, to them it means a lot because after one year of meeting it so rough and tough they want to know if 2012 would be any different.

I want to say to people of the North Windward constituency, I believe this goes to the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines that if you have to take these Estimates how they are: they are of

little hope, as my Honourable Senator Vynnette Frederick pointed out in her presentation, “We want to have hope, but based on what we are seeing before us there seems to be no hope at all”. When we look around in our communities, Mr. Speaker, we are identifying on a daily basis the closure of many, even village shops are closing down. Are they doing so because things are good? Are they doing so because we are displaying prudence in our management of our money? I beg to differ. When you look at rural St Vincent, Mr. Speaker, ask yourself if within these Estimates there is anything for job creation, I hope that when the Budget presentation is given that I could hear something that will give hope to rural St Vincent, I say that and I exercise rural St Vincent, Mr. Speaker, because I believe that the people in these rural areas are the ones within the last year who suffered the most because of what happened to agriculture [on the whole] whole in the rural community and they, Mr. Speaker, are the ones as I said before who are looking forward to these Estimates of 2012 and to make a determination as to whether or not something good, some benefits are in store for them. I have been charged on this side with the responsibility to shadow the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Fisheries, Forestry and Rural Transformation. Mr. Speaker, I noted that on the Recurrent side of the Estimates for Agriculture there are little changes in terms of the amount that is allocated for that purpose, for example Mr. Speaker, in 2012 there is an allocation of \$19,202,717.00 compared to last year of \$18.62 million there about, so as I said, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the Recurrent Expenditure there is hardly any major shift in terms of money allocated for this Ministry. I for one, I noticed as well that some much needed funds have been injected to the Banana Service Unit and I say kudos to the Ministry of Agriculture for that for I say that bearing in mind, if it wasn’t this same Ministry of Agriculture who mess up then these monies could have been put to better use rather than today we have to be allocating it to agriculture and to the Banana Service Unit.

Mr. Speaker, so, when we talk about management of fiscal resource on this side we know what we are talking about, and when we want to make comparison, Mr. Speaker, we must make the comparison in a manner that it is not saturated with political bickering. Because I heard the Minister of Tourism made a comparison in trying to criticize the Honourable Leader of the Opposition with regards to St Lucia. My question is if ... all the Honourable Member was saying you know, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, he was making the point that St Lucia grew economically whereas St Vincent did not grow. We heard the Minister went at length to tell us what he got off of the net and so on; but the point is: if we spend “X” amount of dollars to do something that St Lucia did not do then somewhere along the line then growth should have been some way or the other but you are not seeing it. Mr. Speaker, I have looked at the Ministry of Education in some detail, Mr. Speaker, and most of it I will comment on during

the Budget presentation, however, Mr. Speaker, I want to say to this Honourable House that with \$8.5 million as part of the Capital Budget for Agriculture that is not good enough. I say that because here is a productive Ministry a Ministry that we expect to provide employment, provide monies for quite a significant number of our people over 30% of our people depend directly or indirectly on agriculture but we are seeing a meager \$8.5 million in terms of Capital were just allocated for this important Ministry. [Knocking on the desk]

We have to ask ourselves are we really serious? Are we serious in terms of using our natural resources, Mr. Speaker, to its maximum potential to get what we want as a people? I ask that question because as I said this flimsy amount allocated to this important Ministry in terms of Capital Expenditure is not good enough; not good enough at all and we must not be able ... that does not mean if you are talking about prudence that does not mean you should slash or give little or no regards for agriculture but yet on the other hand we see the Ministry of National Security with millions and we ask ourselves what are we getting from that that we are not getting from the Agriculture Ministry. My point is, Mr. Speaker, there are other Ministries under the Prime Minister's portfolio where monies could have been allocated to Agriculture because the proceedings from agriculture are much more important and much more valuable to the ordinary Vincentian that is the point we are making [Interjection] Yes! Because we under threat.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago the Prime Minister put to this Honourable House an Agreement: A Memorandum of Agreement with regard to cocoa, yes man and we heard how all the niceties all of a sudden attributing to this project; we on this side we supported it throughout the consideration so we expected that in this Budget if ... and we talked about how cocoa and its importance to agriculture and what it can do for the farmers in terms of bringing extra money foreign currencies to our country. And we know all the importance of that and so on, so as they say you must put your money where your mouth is; unfortunately when it comes to this aspect this is not the case. I looked at the Estimates and I saw \$150,000.00 for the cocoa support programme there are advisors to the government making more than that for the year. Are we serious? Are we really serious that we are talking about an initiative that is supposed to bring...

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: A point of order

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: State your point of order.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, the Member is misleading the House, he refers to \$150,000 under cocoa support and says that there are advisors the Prime Minister who are making more than \$150,000 a year. There is no advisor to the Prime Minister who is making that kind of money, Mr. Speaker, and Members must not come to this House and mislead the House, I am not even talking on the substance of the cocoa programme.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: How you know that?

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: I know it because I have studied the Estimates; I have it in my hand.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: [Inaudible]

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: Well then do not speak what you do not know; speak only what you know.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: [Striking of gavel] Honourable Member, let the Honourable Member explain what he said, why are we ... no I am talking to you Honourable Member for Central Kingstown, please let the Honourable Member say what he said.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: Mr. Speaker, I forget to add cumulatively, thank you very much.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Add what?

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: Accumulate, when you accumulate, all, if monies come in it amounts to more than \$150,000.00. Mr. Speaker,

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: I am sure a sanitation worker...

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: Cocoa production...

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: would be accumulating more than \$150,000.00 per year, talk sense when you are talking cents *nah*.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: All right let's ... [striking gavel]

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: I could imagine if the Minister is so upset you could imagine the farmers out there.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Just a minute, just a minute, sit.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: Thank you very much.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Let us try to go through this thing [inaudible] you noticed since I came here I have not taken out my Standing Orders, deliberately I have not taken out my Standing Order because I expect ... I have mine here, but I have not brought it to the fore because I expect we will have a very smooth debate and very little challenge. Let us speak what we know are factual. We are going good so far; right thank you.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I agree with you, we are going very good so far. We are touching a little corn here and there but generally we doing good, I agree with you on that.

Mr. Speaker, this Memorandum of Understanding of Agreement, sorry, that we are debating here; this Agreement holds the Government to certain responsibility and one such responsibility is the upgrading of feeder roads to facilitate cocoa production by the Government and funding agency. I again look at the Estimates, I look at the Ministry of Agriculture and there was nothing there, so I looked at the Ministry of Works and I saw an allocation I think it is about two account numbers it is under; one has I think it is \$2million (let me find my notes) and the other \$13.8 million dollars. But the points is Mr. Speaker, that amount, those amounts sorry, represent the cost to do the feeder roads but in terms of actual allocations there is none for 2012 up to 2014, but interestingly the project is expected to be completed in 2012. Now, that has to be magic of some sort because here you are saying to the people you are telling the farmers that you know for a fact that it is going to cost \$15.8 million to put our feeder roads in good condition. You have this amount in the Estimates but in terms of how it is going to be done nothing whatsoever; in terms of if you are going to put some this year, some next year as it is a three year thing nothing of that sort but you have a grand total, you have a completion date of 2012 and I have to ask myself what this is, and maybe when the Minister deals with this matter we expect to hear how this is going to be done.

Because as I say to you, Mr. Speaker, this cocoa initiative being signed as a form of a Memorandum of Agreement on both sides we agree with it and the impression we got Mr.

Speaker is as if the Government is serious. But when we look at what is before us in the form of the Estimates we have to ask ourselves are they serious? And hence the reason why I said our farming communities they are listening, the farmers, because they want to know ... they know it is a new initiative and in these Estimates they would expecting to hear something substantive because they have become sort of disoriented and disappointed with what is happening in terms of agriculture and they are definitely in need of some way out and they saw cocoa as a means of getting this done. And I would like to know as well, in terms of the ARMAJARO people who the government gave an undertaken to how are they feeling now? What are they saying about us? What are they saying about when our Prime Minister affixed his signature to such an Agreement? They are asking us is this man for real? Is he toying with us? Because in your major documents the Estimates of Expenditure such an important project where you sign on to do your part you have failed to do so, in terms of what you put into these Estimates.

Mr. Speaker, I have noted as well under General Administration: Agriculture General Administration, \$1.4 million has been allocated a drop, a big drop I should add, from over \$4.5 million in 2011, eh! Again, Mr. Speaker, it brings us back to where are we going? In what direction are we heading? What message are we sending out there to the people in the farming community who depend on us to give direction? As far as we can tell with this drastic cut back that we are seeing the farmers could expect less for that is what we are actually saying you know, you are going to expect less because less money in terms of the general agricultural general administration less money is allotted.

Mr. Speaker, this morning the Honourable Member for the Northern Grenadines touched a bit on Fisheries, Fishery Complex, and it is important to note, Mr. Speaker, that I have heard many questions being asked by the Representative of Northern Grenadines with regard to fishing as it relates to the Grenadines. [Inaudible] I asked the question as it relates to market in Chateaubelair, I noted that plans are in place to reorganize management and what not and so on. If this is not going to repeat itself next year in terms of an Indicator then I say, well that is good, in terms of the reorganizing of the management because we need to send an important message to our fisher folks. You know fishing is big business you know, money is there to be made from fishing therefore we must put our houses in order so that our fisher folks could achieve the maximum benefit there is to achieve from this subsector. Now, let me explain that, Mr. Speaker, I said this because I come from a fishing background you know as a little boy I use to be travelling with a tray on my head through places like Chateaubelair and Rose Hall to sell fish for my grandfather, so this is something I know about, you know [interjection] yea!

Yea! The reason I put on so much weight is when I have to eat junk food because of the high prices to eat the “Wellness Food” [Laughter] but anyway, Mr. Speaker, [laughs] you know, as we on that you could ask, Dr. Slater, I remember when the Honourable Terrance Ollivierre and I when we were going off [Inaudible] went to Dr. Slater to do our medical and we were slim and trim then [Interjection] Eh! I would not go into all that [Laughter].

But Mr. Speaker, we are saying here, Mr. Speaker, that in this country in terms of our resources we have too much available to appear as if we are scrunting to get by, you know we have too much resources and we should be able to do better than we are doing. You know other youngsters going to secondary school, people from the Fisheries Division would come into the secondary school and give you different techniques of how to go and fish so I am not too sure if this is still being done, but it is something that is needed because you know we tend to say that young people do not want to get into fishing and farming but if we are not putting the opportunities to them and let them know the monies that are out there to be made. Because many millionaires of the world today are farmers and fishermen you know they reap what there is to from the sea and from the land. You know many persons in the rural communities they are where they are in terms of enjoying life, there children have good education because of fishing and farming and I am sure today that many persons might not want to get into that because they are seeing these two industries fishing and farming as if we, Mr. Speaker, if we want to get maximum benefit from this sector.

Mr. Speaker, under Research and Development there is an allocation of \$1.3 million a little marginal increase from the last time, maybe when the Minister of Agriculture addresses us he could tell us exactly what research and development is going on in this area. You know why I ask him that question? Because when we look at the fact that it seems as if we are producing less and less every year something has to be fundamentally wrong with our R and D Department in terms of agriculture. Something must be wrong, if you look at the Result Indicator for Agriculture Mr. Speaker, we would note that with the major root crop there has been a dramatic decline over the past years and successive Estimates would show that; that things are going down and we want to know what is happening. Our R and D is supposed to look at techniques, experiment on crops and so on and in the end provide better service so that our farmers and our communities could better as a result to enhance the final product. You know we must do these things. When you look at the fact, you have a popular crop like dasheen and eddoes and you see where in the Result Indicators from the Ministry say to us that we are going to improve in these areas but yet the improvement is not there when it comes to the final

product and hence the reason why I go back to the general administration of agriculture where only \$1.4 million is allocated, it goes back to that and the overall Capital Programme of \$8.5 million it goes back to show that we are not as a parliament and the government itself is showing it is beginning to lose faith in the agricultural sector that is the point I could come to because of the scant regard in these Estimates given to agriculture, I have to come to that conclusion, Mr. Speaker. That the Government as it runs out of ideas, and it does not know what to do and throw up its arms and say, "Come what may".

Farmers do not think so, because there are farmers who would say to you that they would continue to farm but I am talking about the Government in terms of its appreciation to what the farmers are doing because if farmers out there are willing to use that iron hoe until it comes a knob but yet we the government itself, based on its allocation, cutting away, cutting back on the service it is giving to the farmers then there might be a time when things might change back and it also explains why, Mr. Speaker, that the young people are not gravitating to the farms you know. What you mean you are talking about the two sacks of fertilizer for a whole acre or so; come on man you need to do more than that. You know sometimes you know when [laughs] ... Mr. Speaker, it would be well you know, it would be nice that through all that cross talk the Member on the Government side get up and debate the Estimates rather than watching each other so that they could say what they have to say. But we on this side we know it is our responsibility and hence we have no fear when it comes to debating these numbers and show the people of this country where these numbers are just not cutting it you know.

So, when you over there watching each other and watching who to debate, we over here we stand up and we do it in style [Interjection] exactly, you put it together but not every Vincentian has one of these, it is your job to explain it to them,

HONOURABLE: Give them Pat-O, give them, give them.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: You tell me apart from Members of this House which one of the Vincentian's house you would find one of these. You put it together, you explain it to them [knocking on desk] I know you are waiting to get ideas from over here you know; you are waiting to get ideas and I am going to give you more but when the Budget time comes around give me that more. [Interjection] Mr. Speaker, my constituency, the constituency of North Leeward that I represent, [Striking of gavel on desk] you hear, Mr. Speaker, we have a record in this country you know, Mr. Speaker, and the record is the longest playing field ever to be constructed in the history of playing fields still taking place in North Leeward ten going on

to eleven years now. You could imagine that I have to ask myself maybe the next election they would start something again. I noticed, Mr. Speaker, [Striking of gavel] there is allocation of \$300,000.00 same as what was there last year. Mr. Burgin, you are my good friend, you see that argument you talking there, you stop that now. [Striking of gavel]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable...

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: You need to come better than that.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable ...

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: You are a Minister of government

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member! [Striking gavel]

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: with responsibility to people.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Please! You are going a little bit overboard that is the Honourable Minister of Housing and no Mr. Burgin in this Honourable House. [Interjection] Eh! How you mean, "I feel that way about him"? What question is that? You seemed to be in a very celebratory mood today [laughter] I noticed that; I do not know if you are celebrating with the ULP, celebrating removing [laughs] Continue.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I know the Honourable Minister, the Honourable Clayton Burgin he and I go way back when and I do not think he would [inaudible] you know it is a give and take thing

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: That is not it.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: Right! Right! So, Honourable Member, my humblest apology if that is the case. I know you are not feeling too bad but anyway, Mr. Speaker, [Interjection]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: [Striking of gavel] All right Honourable Members.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: As I repeated here last year, the people of the constituency of North Leeward it is twice now that same comment has been repeated you know: that we were there for seventeen years. We bought the land which is one of the most important

features of any project, we got the land and it is now that I have noticed based on the Estimates, Mr. Speaker, an allocation of \$300,000.00 is there that is an indication to me that this year the Cumberland Playing Field will not be ready again, even next year either. It will not be finished next year unless they put money from somewhere else to try to prove me wrong, but as I say to you as Members here today as they say they are in a celebrating mood for this date. Well I am in a celebrating mood too; I am in a celebrating mood too December 13th last year the people of the constituency of North Leeward elevated me to this high plateau of this Honourable House you know. And they will continue to do so when we continue to hear certain comments from certain Honourable Members.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to say to this Honourable House because and I say that – I said this point my first time addressing this House, we are all here I believe for the benefit of Vincentians, we might have a different approach but I believe in my heart, Mr. Speaker, that we are all here to do good; we are all here to do good and I know for a fact that when we are on this side making our presentations they know to their selves that we are saying things that are substantive but sometimes when the reality is as we say the Government is not doing things that they are supposed to do sometimes those things throw you off guard.

Mr. Speaker, livestock is a very important part of the Ministry of Agriculture and again when you look at what has been accomplished less than 50% of the target in terms of what this department is expected to do, this is not good enough that is why I ask the question. Everything in terms of what this sector, this Ministry can do to improve the lives of people we are achieving half. We must do better than that and hence the reason why our people are not reaping the rewards they are supposed to reap because the Ministry in my opinion and in the opinion of a lot of people seems to be back pedaling; seems to be back pedaling, Mr. Speaker, you know. Gone are the days when we could boastfully brag about St Vincent and its agricultural product. You look at the vegetable market for example in Kingstown you saw carrots that is being imported. I have nothing against WTO in terms of reciprocating in trade and so on, but the point is that is being done to the detriment of the local carrot. In Rosehall for example at one point they produced the best carrots in the Eastern Caribbean, you know.

So, when we have today ... [Interjection] well, if it does not have labourers; ah wonder who is making the difference now? Well, if today not labour ah wonder who causing it now? Anyway you would answer that. Mr. Speaker, my point is in agriculture and I said I used Rosehall as example of a community that specializes in carrot production it is not so anymore, black pepper

and other stuff. Onions for one time were growing in Rosehall, you know. I know that man and you know that you know. So, Mr. Speaker, I recall in this Honourable House listening, I was not a member of the House yet, members on that side touting the fact that we going ... even on the campaign trail you know we are going to bring back agriculture to its glory years. Well, if this is the glory days something is definitely wrong with the interpretation for the meaning of the word glory.

You know Mr. Speaker, our vegetable farmers during the passage of the hurricane you know we were told that farmers would be given certain input, yes some of the banana farmers got some but many of the vegetables and even tree crop farmers are still waiting. You know those who were able to get their farms back together did so off their own initiative, spend their last dollar to do so because no bank is going to give credit facility easily to farmers because of the not so sure in terms of your crop yielding something beneficial. So, I thought that in these Estimates there would have been some sort of credit facility, something set aside for farmers so that they could go and say borrow some money to get their business going which is not the case. This is not the case and hence when I started out by saying that rural St Vincent was hard hit the most in terms of the pressure that they underwent for the past years and we have seen where this Budget is not so different, these Estimates, sorry are not so different from last year and it is telling us that harder days, tougher days are ahead, tougher days are ahead because there is nothing significant in it to buffer the problems that the farmers of this country and the general public will face.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying to this Honourable House that these Estimates need to go back to the drawing board: go back to the drawing board and come back with something substantial, something better so that the people of this country could get some kind of hope for the coming year. What this is saying the same that is a tougher year. You go in the supermarket, Mr. Speaker, and you are meeting people who we consider from the middle class with calculators calculating to make sure that when they get up there they would not embarrass themselves by the cashier, you know because people have little money now. You go by VINLEC and you hear people mumbling up there because they don't want ... and I say, "Boy alright, the woman say, how much money you are paying on this"? They tell you well, "\$50.00" because they cannot do better. [Interjection] I know so, you know because that is the situation and I cannot see ... you know I know Members of this Honourable House who know that what I am saying is true and they could identify with it because on a daily basis constituents are bombarding them for money to pay light and water bill, so they know that what I am saying is true, they know that.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: You have ten minutes.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: Wow! So, Mr. Speaker, I am saying that we on this side you know Mr. Speaker, we understand the realities out there you know, and I believe on that side you understand it too, but stop pretending man, stop pretending. Understand that the people of this country they are there depending upon you and expecting you to make life easier for them; that is what they want you know, to make life easier for them, you know. Reassure them, tell them, “Well listen we know times are hard but we will put some buffers in place”. So when we are cutting back in terms of the Capital Estimates for agriculture we are cutting it back because the capital Estimates are supposed to carry out the programme of the Ministry so when we cut it by almost \$4 million we are saying that less would be going to the people this what this is saying you know; less is going you know, remember *al yuh say less is good nah*. Mr. Speaker, yea, I sweating under AC *ah nah* [Interjection] [Laughter] Thank you very much, you see that is the kind of camaraderie and love we have on this side for each other that when we are in this kind of mood and we are doing the people’s business our Members are saying, “Cold sweat my brother”. I know that there are some listening on the other side cannot sweat; they cannot sweat because what they are saying they do not have any guts in it they are just trying to read numbers to say, “Boy I sound good with the numbers”. I am talking about the realities out there on the street; I am talking about the people who cannot make ends meet. You ask a teacher as a politician, “They say you got the Estimates”? “Yes”. “What is in there for us”? I am sure you have been asked that question there is no doubt about that. “What is in there for us”?

That is what the working people out there asking, you know why? Because they are feeling the squeeze and they are expecting us to give them answers. That is not the reality, you know why, because we have failed the people of this country for yet another year; we have failed them significantly, Mr. Speaker. What they expect from this Honourable House and from the Government in particular they did not get it. You know and while the Government boasted that they were elected back into office; they forget that the NDP gained four seats; they forget that part. They forget that part you know; they forget that part. They did not lose but then they lose four seats we know that.

Mr. Speaker, in my winding up I want to say to you and Members of this Honourable House I know that you are going to have a blessed Christmas over there you know. You noticed the cheapest ham now is over \$100.00 and there are people in St Vincent who will not be eating ham for the first time for years. [Interjection] Eh! Tell the [Inaudible] tell Vincy that [laughs]. Mr. Speaker, I am saying to you that I wish you and your family, Madam Clerk, I wish you as

well and your family and your staff a Happy Christmas. My Brothers and Sisters on this side I wish you a happy Christmas too and I know that next year during the Budget debate our task would be cut out for us because when we listen to the Prime Minister and we are ready to respond we are doing so in the interest of the people of this country. I want to say as well most importantly to the people of the constituency of North Leeward without your support I would not have been here today, I want to say to you and I want to wish you a happy, happy Christmas; you noticed I am not saying much about the New Year because in the New Year the resilience of the people of North Leeward and for the entire country would have to come full circle in order to bear with what is ahead.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say to you thank you very much, much obliged. [Knocking of desk]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Further debate, Honourable Senator Minister of Works, when you are ready Honourable Member.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, the 13th December is indeed a wonderful day [Applause] [Interjection] and it feels good bringing to the Parliament the Estimates which would govern the expenditure for the next financial year. Mr. Speaker, I heard all sorts of things being spoken and sometimes it is really heart rending when you listen to unprepared presentation, Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition this morning took thirty four minutes out of his forty five minutes. All of us have the same forty five minutes right, Mr. Speaker, all of us, opposition and government alike, right? I just wanted to establish that. He used thirty four minutes to establish the context of what he thought the context around within which these Estimates are lodged and then was surprised to find out that he had run out of time and he only had eleven minutes on which to address the Estimates. But I was convinced, Mr. Speaker, and as each speaker get up on the opposition benches to speak, I am convinced that they are running from the figures. They are running from the figures, every year the Leader of the Opposition used to start off by saying this is a nonsense, it is a deficit budget well, I am coming to that because the most profound statement made ... when somebody uses a pregnant pause for effect and then come out with the most profound statement that they have ever made I will touch on it just now.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition in his eleven minutes ran again from the figures. Mr. Speaker, I have here with the good compliments of one of my colleague's copies of the Budget from 1990. Mr. Speaker, the figures we are addressing today are ... you know what the figures were in 2000 when we took over 2001 – total \$437 million and today we are talking \$793

million ten short years later, after seventeen years of them in office. Wages and salaries are \$142 million and today it is \$243 million everything has progressed; true oil in those days was much cheaper than oil today so therefore when you talk of what you did in your days, Mr. Speaker, it was easier to run government in your days than it is to run government today.

Mr. Speaker, pension and NIS in 2001 was \$14.5 million, today it is \$46 million so I am not going to spend thirty-four minutes to establish the context in which these are established, I am spending two minutes just making that statement and this is the context in which I want to talk. And Mr. Speaker, now that I have my full time I do not mind wasting or spending two or three minutes on the matter of the \$150,000 for the cocoa because he went on further to clarify that he was speaking in accumulative figure, cumulative he said not collective, he said cumulative. I want to refer you to the Estimates, Mr. Speaker, and I will give you a cumulative figure and I may shock you, on page 31 of the Estimates it says:-

“House of Assembly”; the cumulative money paid to the Opposition is just under half of a million dollars a year: \$473,000 to finance the Opposition on the benches but one Member would get up and say that the cumulative for the Advisor of the Prime Minister would work for more than \$150,000 when he was caught saying that one of them was making that; I just want to show you what. So, when they stay out of parliament for two, three and four times they still collect this money you know; still collect this money, \$473,000 a year that is without allowances. The only allowance included in here is the \$1500 a month for your constituency office; I have done the extraction and I am done with that.”

And it reminds me Mr. Speaker, of the night of the Elections in St Lucia a very close friend of ours in St Lucia works for a statutory body over there and she said, “Yea it looks like we gone lose the election, but I suppose I could collect my last month’s cheque for the end of November”. That was her only interest you know, they were losing the election not that they cannot continue to contribute. I am making this point to say that there are certain persons who are obsessed with money and what people make, Mr. Speaker. So that when we speak of these ... when you try to compare \$150,000 for a cocoa support project which is a private sector project not a government project you know and then try to compare it to an Advisor of the Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker, I could only say that it is an obsession with money that is all I can say.

Mr. Speaker, I hear all sorts of statements Roman numerals (ii) and I want to ask the Opposition to use the information before them. I hear that on this 13th day of December 2011 that this country has been experiencing negative growth for four years including 2011 but three of those years were up to 2010 the 13th of December, 2010 and we went to the examination to the people on the 13th December, 2010 with the negative growth that you are talking about and the majority of the persons in St Vincent and the Grenadines voted for the Unity Labour Party that is the point. Thank you, Minister Daniel, Honourable Minister of Agriculture, and I knew you wanted to make it but I make it before you. So, we are having this negative growth that everybody is speaking about, but the people in the country ... you see one of the problems with the Opposition is that they misunderstand the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines. I wish they would because it would make the fourth term that much easier.

Mr. Speaker, it is a disrespect that the people have just spoken and you are coming to this House of parliament one year after on the exact date that we have won the election and say, "There needs to be a change because this is the fourth year of negative growth." The people knew that there was negative growth and they voted for us but they appreciate the effort that we are making in the international circumstances to keep the standard of living of the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines [Applause] that is why we got the majority of the votes not only the majority of the seats you know. I am preoccupied; I must say that by the majority of the votes it is something I want to maintain every time we win an election we must have the majority of the seats and the majority of the votes therefore politics comes into play. And this House, Mr. Speaker, is built on politics, competitive politics so, when we speak politics inside here it is no disrespect for this House you know. This House was born out of politics, competitive politics so we could speak it here, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Roman numerals (ii) to which I refer and this is where talked that you do not hear them talking about the Capital monies that we are going to spend. Gross in a country Mr. Speaker, comes about by the amount of money you pump into an economy and the chances you take, the judgments you make. A very instructive page in the Estimates which everybody in the Opposition overlooks: Functional Classification, the Estimates by functional classification. You would not find it here by Public Works, you would not find it here by the Ministry of Finance and you would not find it here by Ministry of Health and Agriculture. I want to go through them because the one that leads this Current and Capital the highest one which has the second highest percentage of allocation is Economic Affairs 20.2% of total budget of \$793,000,000 allocated to Economic Affairs: the highest general public services. And let me tell you these figures are not

prepared by any politician eh. These figures here while you may say we influence some figure in the Capital Estimates having done that exercise and we put in the project we want to put in, it has a note at the bottom of it. It says:-

“This table has been prepared according to the classification of the functions of the Government (COFOG)”.

[Knocking on desk] So, who does this? The financial experts and the Economist within the Ministry of Finance and Central Planning; that is how governments are run we set policy and they give you the figures with which to manage they say ... One of the most appreciative exercise or one of the exercises that I am most appreciative about is that the Honourable Prime Minister called us to a session at Sunset Shores I believe it was in April or August; August and brought the Government’s Chief Statistician and it was an eye opener for me the way that this young lady carries out her duties of office, I am told she is a South Leeward woman. Very efficient, very effective and she has her finger on all the pulses in St Vincent and the Grenadines. You ask about flour she can tell you, you ask about beer, she can tell you, you ask about ground provision she even tell you between different types of ground provisions. What we ship and what we do not ship and what we import, the effect of this importation on the economy and it was a very worthwhile exercise and an exercise that I would advise to have on a more frequent basis. [Knocking on the desk].

I say this, Mr. Speaker, to give credence to this page because we can stand up all day and play politics on the other side and go back to 2011 Result Indicators telling you what did not happen in 2011. We are not talking 2011 today, Mr. Speaker, we are speaking 2012; the Estimates we are debating today are 2012 with projections for 2013 and 2014. When we come in Budget you can go back there and to the business. To the business is if you want to do something with the Result Indicators use the 2012 Indicators and compare those to the Capital Estimates that is a reasonable exercise I would ask you to do and this lesson is free I don’t charge *al yuh* the next one a *gon* charge *yu* . [Interjection] *Like ah saying everything you been saying* [Laughter] [Knocking on desk].

Mr. Speaker, Public Order and Safety, I did not tell you the figure of Economic Affairs how much money it is I just told you the percentage \$160 million, General Public Services \$207 million which is the highest category 26.1% and to get what is included in here you will have to go through the entire Estimates. But I will advise you to make your work short go to the

Ministry of Finance, speak to the experts over there and let them give you an idea of what is included in these figures. And you would have a totally different figure when you come and speak in this House on the floor. Mr. Speaker, one speaker on the other side as I opened I said this very profound statement that she had a large pregnant pause before she was going to describe one sentence which characterizes last year's Estimates there was the pregnant pause and I expected an out of this world statement; she said last year's Budget was never sustainable it was all talk: that is how she summarises her presentation here tonight.

Education, Mr. Speaker, between Capital and Recurrent \$147 million the third highest 18.6%, the Honourable Member for a the Southern Grenadines was correct with regards to the percentage and he may have viewed this page; Health 9.7% with \$77.2 million; Public Order and Safety, what is this fifth? Social Protection, sorry, 9.1% ranks over Public Order and Safety but I heard over here how we spending so much money, more money under the Ministry of National Security than you spend in Agriculture and then the same Member for North Leeward said that the Prime Minister's vote Capital vote you can take money out of that and put it in agriculture. Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's Capital vote of the Prime Minister's office is \$7 million: \$2.3 million is for the OECS government for regional integration project and what is it to develop and install information technology application systems for Ministries and Government Agencies, you want to take that out and put it to agriculture? A government PBX the one we have there must be when Noah was in short pants \$1 million, you are going to take that out and put it to agriculture; it needs to be replaced.

An ICT Center to develop and install applications systems for departments and agencies for the government of SVG, they have come inside here and they have strapped us before, they talked all sorts of things against ICT, now you put money take it and put it to agriculture. That is what is in the Prime Minister's vote I am giving you what is in the Prime Minister's vote. So, the point I am making, Members come here and speak and they are not preparing themselves for what they are going to say [Knocking on the desk] the only money here Special Development Projects phase (2) \$500,000 for small development projects throughout the country. Well, some of that could include some agriculture depending on it; that is the Prime Minister's discretionary vote. Purchase of a vehicle for \$80,000 and then you have another, the Center of Excellence to purchase and install security and telephone systems and for outstanding payments and retention on the building out at Diamond, you are going to take that and put it into agriculture.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just want to show you that sometimes we make these statements for some cheap political purpose and it is not worth it because there are some of us who listen and will try to strip you back to where you started.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, I haven't interrupted for the entire day and I just want to for the purpose of elucidation, Mr. Speaker. To the extent that the Honourable Member for North Leeward and the shadow Minister for agriculture was making a case with respect to prioritization of funds and that was referencing the office of the Prime Minister and to the extent that the Honourable Senator was walking us through the votes allocated in the Estimates to the Office of the Prime Minister. I think he should have continued the journey and he would have found in the same table that he was looking at that there is in fact a provision of a vehicle for the Residence of the Prime Minister for \$80,000; a Special Division Project for \$500,000; refurbishment of the Prime Minister's Residence for \$260,000; Security Quarters for the Prime Minister for \$200,000; and Special Works and Services for \$500,000: \$1.5 million.

HONBOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, what point is the Honourable Member making?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I am not [Inaudible]

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Well, Mr. Speaker, I am not giving away for that.

HONOURABLE MR SPEAKER: I am just going to find out. What is the point of order really?

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: The point of order, Mr. Speaker, is that he cut short the list of funds

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: But that is his [inaudible]

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: from which the monies could have been diverted to agriculture.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: He cannot tell me what to say.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: But that is his prerogative, his privilege.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Well, let us know the privilege

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: There is nothing in the rule.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Well, let us know his privilege it is \$1.5 million that is all we want to know. All we want to know, I am making the point, Mr. Speaker, and I am going to say it.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: But you can say it when you are debating.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Well, I am making it now, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Because you wouldn't be debating it?

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Because he elucidates and I want him to conclude it.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: You would not be making that point again when you are debating.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Yes, I will.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Well, you cannot, how are you going to make it two times?

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Then you may stop me and I will return to it.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: [Laughs]. Mr. Speaker, it is this but they are accustomed to repeating themselves because the Leader of the Opposition when he spoke this morning for thirty-four minutes said the same thing over and over in different words. So, they are accustomed to repeat themselves, Mr. Speaker. I am glad that at least I get a Member of the Opposition to go to the Estimates and call out some account numbers and figures. I have tempted you into that corner, Honourable Member for Central Kingstown, because I know when you come this evening you are going to wax philosophy, you are going to wax a higher level than all of us inside here so, I give you an opportunity now to at least read some numbers

and the numbers for the Prime Minister's Residence. I know you have there to get there eventually but wait until you get there; by the time you get there the vote will be much higher, all right okay.

Mr. Speaker, [you trying to take me off course ah] St Clair, sorry, Honourable Member for Central, we went to the Grammar School together and he went on to A' levels I believe and we left Grammar School the same time I believe and we did many things that boys did together, Mr. Speaker. So, he knows me and he tries to cut me short when I am on a run, but he will not be able to cut me short when I am on a run. So, this nonsense about transferring money back to the point from the Honourable Prime Minister's vote to agriculture; well, the Minister of Agriculture will deal adequately with the Ministry of Agriculture. Speaker, I just want to say on the matter of cocoa project remember this project is a private sector project you would not find monies in the Estimates for the launching of the ... it is a support by the Government, the Government is supportive of it and we will do ... there is an Agreement that we spoke about in this parliament and a resolution came here for discussion and approval last meeting of parliament.

Mr. Speaker, time? Okay I have twenty five minutes left; okay. Mr. Speaker, the Estimates which governed my Ministry, Mr. Speaker, on page 427 and the major programmes of the Ministry are there and you would see that we have \$31,026,000.00 allocated there for us and you would see that the money for BRAGSA remains the same. I want to make this point; the money for BRAGSA remains the same for the last three years since it was established. In fact, the money that BRAGSA gets today is less than what was allocated to the Roads Division when there was a separate vote to pay salaries to the Road Division of the Ministry any money they get was going into Works. BRAGSA is getting \$16.5 million, but all their salaries for the entire staff are included in that \$16.5 million. So I would say the introduction of BRAGSA has reduced the financial burden on the Government by some \$5 million per year but yet you are seeing more effective work out there under BRAGSA.

Right now, Mr. Speaker, as I speak there are over 4500 persons employed cleaning roads, fixing roads, patching roads, carting roads, [Applause] trucking away rubbish \$5 million, \$2 million was spent in September to do some clean up. A lot of BRAGSA money was spent during April and May after the flood to restore Georgetown and the \$5 million work programme. Mr. Speaker, there has been aspect of it that I have spoken out because I was not happy, I want to state categorically right here that the quality of the hot mix has asphalt has improved to my

satisfaction and there is no more a quarrel on this matter of hot mix asphalt. But BRAGSA I believe that based on information we got, Mr. Speaker, when we came to office in the year 2000 when the New Democratic Party ran the affairs of this country the monies allocated to the Ministry of Works for Christmas clean-up was \$200,000.00. In fact, they approved \$300,000.00 but they couldn't even spend \$300,000.00 so the monies expended for Christmas clean up in 2000 was \$200,000 and today we are talking \$3 million and we spend it and we clean it.

Mr. Speaker, when you drive on the roads of St Vincent they feel light and they look bright especially the bright moonlight that we had for the past couple of weeks it really looks nice as you drive around. Mr. Speaker, we will try to sustain that. There are no great improvements or additional for the Ministry, I will deal with it in more detail during the Budget but Mr. Speaker, the Capital Estimates I believe we should go to those Capital Estimates which are found from pages 634-637 inclusive. Mr. Speaker, you would see some smaller projects like I heard one Member for North Leeward said the people of my constituency want to know what is in the Estimates for them but he never read out a single figure from the Estimates except the \$150,000.00 for cocoa. And I do not know why they love cocoa so, because I have said in this House and I would say it again in the next debate in parliament, under agriculture in their manifesto, they never mentioned the word cocoa under agriculture. They mentioned it twice in very nondescript paragraph; not under agriculture did you mention cocoa once. This obsession with cocoa everything is NDP, NDP cocoa, I don't know NDP cocoa, I know a different kind of cocoa.

Mr. Speaker, Transport and Works, Park Hill the drainage project to be completed there \$700,000, and I am reading Mr. Speaker, from page 634; so those of you in Park Hill listening that is what your Parliamentary Representative and your government will be doing for you. Sporting Complex, we are going to spend \$600,000 on that and it says:

“For the rehabilitative works on Arnos Vale (1) playing field and the netball court”

As you know, Mr. Speaker, we are having three one day matches; Australia it is Minister? Australia next year and we are hosting HAFNA, I am not familiar with all those terms but we have to upgrade for the one day internationals with Australia and some other activities. In fact, we had some excellent cricket I am told out there; there were congratulatory statements made this morning. Now, Mr. Speaker, the next one is the rehabilitation of the old NCB building; in fact if you look in the Result Indicator for 2012 you may see the Treasury Building and Printery

that gives you the entire picture of what we want to do. But what is allocated this year basically is \$750,000 for the rehabilitation of the old NCB building that is one which NCB just moved out of to go into the REIGATE building to house the Registry. Registry is in poor shape and they need space why rent more when we can fix that. So, we are going to fix that for \$750,000 and the Audit Department those of us who read the Report from the Leader of the Opposition and the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee would have seen some concerns of the Director of Audit; and that is where that money is allocated. There is a small amount there for \$77,000 for rehabilitation of Byera Hill Road.

Mr. Speaker, \$2.7 million under local loans and on page 636 under External Loans both of them must be read together that is National Disaster Management Rehabilitation and Reconstruction you would see it is the same account number, project number 551202 and basically that is \$2.7 and \$7 so it is \$9,785,000.00 that is to do the rehabilitative work, to reconstruct and rehabilitate infrastructure impacted by weather events. If you go back to the ... Mr. Speaker, I am just trying to link the Result Indicators for 2012 which I believe is on page 425, you will see all the works that are there Byera; Grand Sable; Caratal Miss Jane Bridge; well there is a separate exercise for Camarcabou and Lively Roads; London Jack Hill Road, Jennings; O' Brians; Perseverance; Gorse Road; Lauders; Lowmans; Byera; Grand Sable; Caratal and Lady Jane; Dark View and Sandy Bay. So, that money, \$9.7 million, has been allocated to my Ministry for direct supervision and getting those works done.

The other one of \$1.5 million you would see there for the reconstruction of the Customs and Excise Buildings which is at its almost terminal stage and it should be completed by the end of 2012; this money should see the completion of that. You know we have been struggling with that building for the longest while. We want to get it finished and clean up and have it ready for Christmas when the barrels come you would be going into a new Customs building.

Mr. Speaker, a very exciting... some is allocated here for the second time in my sojourn here in parliament as a Minister I am very pleased to see a figure like this for the Kingstown Clean-up Campaign, \$3.7 million and that is Project No. 550803 and it says to improve the esthetics and to support legitimate commercial activities in Kingstown. Basically, you would recall in 2008 I spoke of a clean-up campaign for Tokyo and organizing the vendors in Kingstown, getting the streets lighter and cleaner and less populated and getting more comfortable and covered vending areas for vendors. We have come up with some exciting solutions and this is only part of the funds there are some other funds which would come because I have been able at the Ministry to

attract the interest of two major commercial houses in Kingstown. I am not going to call their names but they are going to be getting involved in this exercise and I believe we may almost double this figure in 2012 and we should be able to do something remarkable for vendors of Kingstown. I am not only doing it for the vendors, Mr. Speaker, I am doing it to stop the inconvenience to passersby on the road.

You would have heard a notice last week, Mr. Speaker, that my Ministry will not be allowing any new vending activity for this Christmas and notice has been sent to the Town Board and have been sent out to all media houses, I saw it in the Newspapers last weekend and I am asking for cooperation on it. Mr. Speaker, we cannot continue it, you know when you go under NCB verandah down here you have a night depository Mr. Speaker, and you have a security exit door and they are completely blocked by vending. It cannot continue in the form in which it is. I want to say this which is the most I would say on it that I believe during the course of 2012 we will be coming up with what is called a vendors' market, a very attractive looking local architecture not a monstrosity as what is down there. Very little we can do with that; in my virgin speech here in parliament, Mr. Speaker, I do not know if you recall, I said, "let us convert that to offices for government and reduce the rent and build a new cheaper market". It would take a lot of money but in the meantime, Mr. Speaker, we will be proceeding to get a vendor's market during the course of 2012 and there are lots of space on top of the verandahs of this building that vendors could use, and once you start using it people will get accustomed and start going up there. So, we are going to ease that problem for the nation as a whole.

South Leeward Highway. Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed and I am sure many more persons are more disappointed than I am because we are still only at the stage of design for South Leeward Highway that is what is in the Estimates. If I refer you to them you would see \$200,000 under Local Loans on page No. 634 Project No. 550802 no sorry, No. 550704 and that is for consultancy services, but that is for our local counterpart and then on the other side South Leeward Highway same number [inaudible] money only \$850,000 for this year and then 2013 \$2 million and 2014 \$5 million. So, I am the road is not going to be ready for 2012, we will get to the stage of the design and we will get to the stage of awarding contract but no physical work can be done they say because I believe that the contract we have there for the design would go up until August: July/August and they are on the road every day with their stations and doing their work. They have done the traffic count alright and all I can promise the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines parliamentary representatives for the Leeward side including Honourable Member for South Leeward and the Honourable Member for North Leeward, the

Honourable Member for Central Leeward as I said before we will try to keep changing the dressing as frequently as we can so the sore would not break out too big; and do some patching as you see we continue to try, but you are not going to see that new ... It is eleven kilometers and the total project funds here I see estimated project cost \$13.5 million that is a 2013 job.

Some of the other figures here, Mr. Speaker, and I suppose we could be criticized for it, you see if the opposition would do its work they would have a little more substance with which to bite: a little more teeth. Because you can sting us on the next four items under page No. 634 you know, with the Windward Highway and monies we have for certain contractors that have not been paid as yet and so on and what not, but you are not interested in that so I would just pass over that.

Under the Capital Expenditure, Mr. Speaker, on page No. 636, there is more money there under the ROC for the Langley Park River Basin rehabilitation and that is to construct damaged roads and install river and coastal defense at Basin Hole.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Ten minutes.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Yes, Mr. Speaker, in fact that project has been tendered and I just made some comments on recommendations that came to me this morning which should be going to the Tenders Board. The Vermont Francois Bridge the Honourable Member for South Leeward would be happy to know that that is in the Estimates and continuing for the construction of the Vermont Francois Bridge. Feeder Roads, rehabilitation of Lively and Camarcabou and then another big project for this year Colonarie Bridge. Right now we are building the bypass which would have to be built because when we knock out the Colonarie Bridge it is the only link apart from going through South Rivers and Mc Cracken and come round. So, we are building right now, in fact the Bailey's Bridge is in place which is a temporary bridge and the contractors are now finishing up the gabion baskets for that job is not finished the paving is almost done and we should have that hopefully by very early in January completed so that this contract could be put in place. The matter is before the Tenders Board, a recommendation has been sent to the Tenders Board when that is approved I will announce who the contractor will be.

Mr. Speaker, you know, this reminds me, that you know sometimes you give certain local contractors get jobs and you hear nothing but I recall recently when there was this furore about the hot mix asphalt and my brother's company was involved and I was taken to task on the

subject matter but when they got a job some years ago it was nepotism, you know. So, it all depends on when and how, I just thought that I would drop that in for a little chuckle.

Persons were talking this morning of Learning Resource Centers; I do not see anything here for Northern Grenadines, the Honourable Member for Northern Grenadines did raise it but after all we have built a nice school in Bequia that could wait a little while. After all the wattle and dab school that the former parliamentary representative allowed there you know, Mr. Speaker, I was the one as Minister of Works if it is one credit I want to take is that I put the water closet in the schools in Bequia and [Inaudible] the outside toilet [Knocking on the desk] [Interjection] yea, but I am bragging on Bequia you can brag on Owia because they say sometimes I look like James Mitchell. [Laughter]

External loans, Mr. Speaker, when I dealt with the rehabilitation \$7 million and Vigie Highway, Mr. Speaker, the Vigie Highway is continuing. Sometimes I myself as Minister I am not too comfortable with the approach to it but I am advised most of the times by the technical persons and I would prefer to see quicker work done to get that Vigie Highway rehabilitated. And I will use my influence Parliamentary Representative for Marriqua and West St George. [Interjection] No, it is not the stretch; Vigie Highway starts from the roundabout to Peruvian Vale that is called Vigie Highway, so when you see Vigie Highway in here it is not the VG long stretch that is only one part of the Vigie Highway; under the classification it is the Vigie Highway. So, you have the Windward Highway, Leeward Highway and the Vigie Highway and then I have dealt with the other one. So, the total Capital Estimates for my Ministry is \$43,902,000.

Mr. Speaker, I would have more to say on what happens in the New Year, I believe that the purpose of this exercise today was just to speak on the matter of the Estimates before us and I think that we on this side fulfilled that mandate and I trust that there is not too much of a repetition on the other side when it comes to the debate of the Budget in January because we had a full ear today and I am sure you would not want to hear that same thing repeated for the debate, because most of them debated the Budget today and not the Estimates.

So, Mr. Speaker, I do not have a constituency the Honourable Leader of the Opposition never fails to remind me that I do not have a constituency but my own his larger than his own because my constituency as General Secretary of the Party is.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Mr. Speaker,

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: May I wrap up first Mr. Speaker, please?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: No, if he is standing on a point of order ...

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

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Yes, let me hear you. State your point of order.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: The point of order is the Honourable Member is being insulting in his reference to the contribution this time. Mr. Speaker, here is a Member who has the privilege like I had at one time to be a Senator in the parliament and is on the floor making comments that he would not like to come here to the Budget to hear irrelevant statements or contributions or repetitious statements from Members of the[inaudible]. We are free and entitled to present in the way we choose and see fit and I think that the reference is very disparaging to the comments that we elected Members of the parliament have been voted here to do; and it is not for him to make that determination, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Just a minute, I cannot remember if the word ... just sit, I cannot remember if the word “irrelevance” was used,

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Never, never used.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I know repetitious was the word

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Repetitive, repetitive.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: “Repetitive”, sorry, was the word used no [Inaudible] you see the thing is I cannot see in what context we can call it insult but then again one must understand that as Speaker, I am the one who make judgments on these issues and we are discussing the Estimates today and I know what the Rules are in relation to the Estimates and the Budget debates and when it comes to that judgment call I would make it because if I find Members are repeating themselves in the Budget as you said, I will say “repeat yourselves”, and I will bring it to your attention. But I do not find these statements as [Inaudible] probably you say [Inaudible] Honourable Member your greetings.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, I thank you that you have ruled so quickly on the matter because the introduction of the word “irrelevant” was quite irrelevant but I said it, I did use the word “repetitive” but you have ruled on the matter and I think I made my point quite succinct. Mr. Speaker, as I was saying that I do not have a constituency, so you expect greetings from me and I do so in my capacity as being a Member of this House through nomination as a Senator and I believe that what is responsible for me being here is the work that I do in the Party to which I belong which is the Government of St Vincent right now. So, I speak therefore globally, nationally and I extend greetings; Christmas greetings to one and all throughout St Vincent and the Grenadines because *I see us my representation at the level I am at that wide. Members of the Party, supporters of the Party and other persons in St Vincent and the Grenadines I extend Christmas greetings to you all. Those of you who have nothing to do on Sunday, there is a luncheon at the Party Headquarters, the price is only \$45.00; thanks for the advertisement, Mr. Speaker, lots of things to eat and drink.

It is ... the business community is saying it is a bit slow but as I said to them last night, I met some of them last night and said, “Hey you haven’t started receiving the \$3 million yet and the \$5 million of the work programme. Those payments are coming in during this week. You could imagine if you add \$3 plus \$5 million on top of what you have sold so far I believe you would have a reasonable Christmas. I believe that the income for all this season with 4500 people being employed, Mr. Speaker, at this time of the year it is an excellent move by this administration and I want to congratulate the Minister of Finance [Applause] wish him his trip to Bethlehem I wish that he visits all the holy places and that when he comes back he will be in his very sound state of mind and body to carry the work of these Estimates that we have prepared.

So, Merry Christmas to you, Mr. Speaker, the Members of the House, all of St Vincent and the Grenadines and I wish you happy New Year when we debate the Budget in January. Thank you very much. [Knocking on desk]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Further debate, Honourable Member, for South Leeward.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, I rise to make my contribution to 2012 Appropriation Bill [Interjection] the Estimates, sorry. I first of all want to thank the God that I serve for giving me the opportunity to be here another time. I have heard references made to the fact that today being the 13th December and some people are in a celebratory mood nothing is wrong with that but I just want to say that it is another year far as I

am concerned and the Bible teaches that we ought to number our days. And it is in this context, Mr. Speaker, that I am really grateful to Almighty God for another year. And I am hoping and trusting that the next year that is before us and I am hoping that we all live to see it; and that we will all prosper and be in health. Mr. Speaker, I want to take the opportunity also to thank the people of South Leeward for going out to the poles one year ago and electing me as their representative. Mr. Speaker, I want to say to those good people of South Leeward be it supporters of the NDP or the ULP that I am a representative for all and I will endeavour to perform the duties to which I am elected without fear or favour.

Mr. Speaker, I have listened all day and I am reminded that the parliament can be referred to as the arena and in the arena, Mr. Speaker, you are going to find that there are going to be some battles going on and this parliament is not any different from the other parliaments we have seen on television or even years past in St Vincent and the Grenadines. We continue to have the cross-talk, I really do not believe that it is designed to be detrimental to anyone but I believe, Mr. Speaker, that it is there to disrupt the message that the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines should really be hearing.

Mr. Speaker, when we examine the Estimates that is before us, the 2012 Estimates to me bears a striking similarity to that of 2011, albeit I have heard a speaker before me saying that 2011 is virtually over and we should not be making reference to that but as we look back, Mr. Speaker, I recognize right away that similar to 2011, in 2012 we are going to have a deficit Budget and the reason why I am saying that, Mr. Speaker, it is because the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines they are the ones who actually feel. So, while we come into the parliament and we debate and we participate in the arena the reality is it is the people out there who are listening to us who are feeling the pain. When I look back, Mr. Speaker, I recognize that many, many people have been suffering, I remember earlier in our debate, one proud Member on the Government side he got up in making his contribution and he said that I encourage ... he encouraged the Prime Minister to present a negative Budget because in doing so that would be a catalyst for growth: a negative Budget. [Interjection] Well, *ah* tell you it wasn't you Honourable Senator, it wasn't you.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at that, all that the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines would have experienced ... because if they were saying that was a catalyst for growth, all the growth Mr. Speaker, if we are honest with ourselves and we are sober in our thought all the real growth that occurred in 2011 would have been unemployment, frustration, hunger, poverty,

hopelessness, despair and criminal activities. It is all well and good for us, Mr. Speaker, to sit down and we may say that that is not the case, some of us may say that and some of us may also say that we are not experiencing that but the real world is outside. The real world is when you go through your constituency and you hear the pain and suffering that people have been subjected to simply because of the Budget that was presented to us or to them in 2011. So, I am saying that the 2012 Estimates bear striking similarity to that of 2011 and if for that year our citizens had to endure the pain of labor that I really and truly cannot say that I expect things to change in 2012.

Mr. Speaker, the lives of our people have changed for the worse. I know that there are some who are living and feeding from the fat of the land but generally speaking the economic condition of many people have changed for the worse and many are wondering where the next dollar is going to come from. I am not just saying this, Mr. Speaker, it is something that I have experienced and when I am making my contribution to this debate, I am not doing so because I want to score any political points, I am doing so because I have an understanding of what have been feeling and what people are going through even today as we are talking. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the Estimates as many Vincentians look forward. Because when I entered politics I made one vow, it didn't matter to me which political party is going to enhance the way of life of the Vincentian people, it does not matter to me at all as long the lives of the people are improved. But the thing is, Mr. Speaker, the lives of the people have taken a turn for the worst, we can laugh and we can talk, we can do all sorts of things because we are in our comfort zone, Mr. Speaker, but many people out there are suffering. And the Estimates as presented to us really and truly offered no hope to the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and I can say that you must brace yourself for another year of Labour pain.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to move forward and look at the recurrent expenditure, there is a category there that really concerns me and the category is 'Other Transferred'; that category Mr. Speaker, concerns me because [Interjection] eh, you can't find it there, it is not in that, they have actually given us a different piece of paper, Senator, so you are not going to find it in that, but you know precisely what I am talking about, I am talking about the summary. When I compare the allocation there for 2012 it is a \$103.4 million compared with 2011 which is \$113.8 million. The only aspect of this, Mr. Speaker, that I am really concerned, if all things being equal except a situation where BRAGSA is going to be giving or would be financed from other source other than 'Other Transfer' it concerns me as a resident of the Leeward zone.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: [Break in transmission], if Member can just...if the Honourable Member could explain what he just said to me please because he was saying, the way I understood it that BRAGSA is being financed from other sources other than by the subvention and allocations...I just wanted to hear the point that he was making. [Interjection] [Striking the gavel] Mr. Speaker, may I complete?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Yes continue.....

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Okay I am complete, Mr. Speaker...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Hello, no, I said you are on the floor.....

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, I wasn't clear on the point that the Honourable Member was making I just wanted some elucidation as called for in the Standing Orders, that is all.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: All right, Honourable Member.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, the point I was making is that except, that is what I said you know, except BRAGSA is going to be funded by some other source, I didn't say that it is going to be funded by some other source, you understand. So, Mr. Speaker, the figure there concerns me because as a resident of Leeward zone we are subjected to some of the worst road networks in St. Vincent and the Grenadines that is why I am really concerned, Mr. Speaker. We have noticed that BRAGSA has the responsibility of repairing the roads and if we are going to take a clue from this estimate, Mr. Speaker, that we are saying in 2011 and how difficult it was for BRAGSA to repair roads, now you can understand why I am concerned. I know the Honourable Minister of Transport and so on went on and outlined some of the works which will be done by his Ministry and he has jurisdiction over BRAGSA but BRAGSA has been unable to repair the roads and I suspect, Mr. Speaker, it is because they were not properly funded. I consider, Mr. Speaker, some of the work that will be done, "will be done".

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, please may I, under the standing orders, I will just like to, Section 33 (6) reads as follows, I know you haven't taken yours out but I can do you the honor and read it to you, and I will just like to make sure that Members are aware

that there is this Section in the Standing Orders, not that I will use it, but I may use it based on how the presentation is going, it says:

“In the debate arising out of the motion to refer the Estimates of Expenditure for the forthcoming year to a Standing Committee of the whole house.....but any Minister may before the conclusion of the debates speak again once only for not more than 15 minutes in reply to any points arising in the debate on any department or subject with the responsibility for which he is charged.”

Okay, it exists in the Standing Orders, I may wish to use it, I am just saying that up front. Thank you.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I will of course look at the Standing Orders keenly in relation to that [Interruptions] that is what I said I will look at the Standing Orders keenly. Alright continue.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I will continue, I examined from the list of proposed roads to be done for the year 2012 but I will use a broad category, Mr. Speaker, which says ‘the Windward Highway’, so there is allocation for the Windward Highway. We have the Vigie Highway and approximately \$2.5 million are allocated for work there [Interjection] good thank you. Murray’s Road which is another part of the Windward Highway \$1.2 million and all is very happy, Mr. Speaker, when the road network improves and lets work there on those two pieces of road and progress according to plan I will be quite pleased. But Mr. Speaker, the money allocated for those roads of actual work that will be conducted.

Let us look at the South Leeward Highway now, Mr. Speaker, and that is from, let us say across the Hospital road going down we notice that there is an allocation and I heard the Honourable Minister quoting them from the CDB \$800,000 that is for the South Leeward Highway, and from local funding \$200,000. Now generally, Mr. Speaker, people who are using the Leeward Highway might smile and say well finally a little bit of work will be done because over the years, Mr. Speaker, the roads have almost been in a state of disrepair. There is not a piece of road on the South Leeward Highway that you can drive extensively for any length of time without experiencing some discomfort because of the bad state of the road. But when you look at the monies allocated it is going to take the smile off your face because that allocation is not for actual work, the allocation there is for design and to conduct study in design. Mr. Speaker,

that is the reality and it therefore makes me wonder whether or not there is a concerted effort to make the lives of the people of the Leeward zone uncomfortable. Mr. Speaker, I know I have heard reference made, that is why at the last sitting of Parliament I have had to ask the question whether or not there is an order of priority in respect to road repair in St. Vincent and the Grenadines because it is a clear bias and I am wondering if it is because the Leeward Zone, and if I were to take West Kingstown into account, are primarily supporters of the New Democratic Party. I am wondering [Interjection] No, no, no, no, I am not talking about the whole of Kingstown.

You see, Mr. Speaker, another year is going to come and I listen to the Honourable Prime Minister *wanna be* stating that no actual work would be done until 2013 on the South Leeward Highway, so we must endure another year of discomfort on the worst network of roads in St. Vincent and the Grenadines as if the people that use those roads, the people who live on the Leeward Zone do not pay their contribution of taxes. Mr. Speaker, I am also wondering whether or not [Knocking of gravel on desk] scant respect is shown for the people on the Leeward Zone. Mr. Speaker, there are some people who have the luxury of changing a vehicle nearly every day so even if one of their vehicles sustain damages on those very poor roads, they can change. Matter of fact I recognise that some people drive one vehicle up and another one down, but the vast majority of the people on the Leeward Zone should their vehicle sustain any damage they have no alternative. So why is not the Government placing more emphasis on improving the network on the Leeward Zone?

Mr. Speaker, I remember last year \$500,000 were allocated you know, for that same Leeward Highway and not a square inch of it was fixed. When we asked questions in the Parliament as to when the roads would be repaired the excuse was given, Mr. Speaker, that because of the flooding in Georgetown resources would have to be diverted, okay fine. So I do not see a situation where we are foreseeing that there is going to be some other natural disaster that is going to cause money not to be allocated to fixing the roads in the Leeward Zone. Mr. Speaker, [interjection] yeah I recognise the fact that you have to design it, but how long are you designing the road [interjection] [knocking of gravel on desk] I recognize, Mr. Speaker, that CO Williams was doing the same thing, they were designing the road for just last year, so how long is it going to be taking for there to be a design of the South Leeward Highway? I will return to that in the not too distant future if the Lord will. But, Mr. Speaker, I now want to talk about briefly the Vermont/Francois Bridge, I notice, Mr. Speaker, that there is an allocation of \$1.6 million for that bridge. Now, Mr. Speaker, Vermont and Francois those are two villages in the

Buccament Valley and those villages are separated by the Buccament River and having spent the earlier years of my life in that general area I recognize, Mr. Speaker, that people from both villages in order to move from one point to the next had to, as we say down there in local terms, we had to jump the river and the Buccament River Mr. Speaker, is a very dangerous river when it is in flood and when the river is in flood the people from Vermont cannot get over to Francois nor the people from Francois get over to Vermont except they walk all the way down to Retreat where there is a bridge. And that is not the only inconvenience, Mr. Speaker, whenever people are going to Francois and it is a long walk and if it rains you are in trouble and there have to be subjected to higher fares for a van to take them to Francois. But I am not saying that that is not the way it is, it is a reality and therefore I am saying that I am quite pleased that there is going to be a bridge. Because when I entered politics in 2005 I told the people of Vermont and Francois that once elected and the New Democratic Party has returned to Office I as their representative will ensure that they get a bridge because I am well aware, I am acquainted with the difficulties that confront them. [Interjection] I really do not want to get into that because the very people, Mr. Speaker, who are talking about asking man not to remove house are the same people who signed a letter authorizing the said gentleman to get water and electricity but we will leave that for another time.

Mr. Speaker, that bridge as far as I am concerned, I have actually seen some actual drawing of the bridge, I will address the bridge issue in more detail during the Budget but I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that the person that designed the bridge I do not think that that person is familiar with the area and it is an excuse on the part of the Government for not starting the bridge by saying that the Representative for South Leeward encourage a man to build his house there when the man has been there from the year 2000. [interjection] well you must remember what you speak, you see sometimes, Mr. Speaker, it is a case of how quickly we forget because a particular Honourable Member was saying to one of my colleagues, *'he told the man to build there'*, I don't forget so easily. I will return to that as I said, Mr. Speaker, but I recognise that on Page 420 of the Result Indicator, it is interesting to note that there is something that reads this way;

“Construct the Colonarie, Peebles, Swamp Gut, Francois/Vermont and Fort Charlotte bridges by December 2011.”

Interestingly Mr. Speaker, right next to that we have;

“Construction on the Peebles and Swamp Gut bridges is complete. Work has commenced on the Vermont/Francois Bridge.”

I really do not think we are talking about the same bridge because to date absolutely nothing has been done except a letter that has been sent to a gentleman who is apparently in the path of the bridge to remove himself from there within 14 days or his house will be demolished and he will have to pay the cost. [Interjection] So why have it in the Result Indicator that work at the bridge has started. Typical, typical, typical, we have come to understand this ULP Administration for this reason. [Interjection] well, well the fact remains you were saying here that work has started and absolutely nothing has been done. Listen you have the honour of being the worst representative that that place has had, so your council [interjection] [Knocking on desk with gravel]. Alright, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, when I entered politics in 2005 you know I remembered Honourable Senator Slater said to me, ‘*way yo call up there*’, arm Heritage Square, he said to me politics is not Sunday School you know, but I am giving you a little job eh, you talking offense. But I have to admit that you beat me for he cried and he said to his people ‘*alyuh aint see the man beat me*’. But up to now I don’t understand how he scrapes through but he did, so you have one on me. But in 2010 you appeal for bad light [interjection] [laughs] that is impossibility; your political shelf life has expired.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, please. Please continue with the debate [knocking of gravel on desk] let us stop as we say the throwing of words across.... [Break in transmission] Honourable Member.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Mr. Speaker, I come in peace, I am a peaceful man but I reserve the right to defend myself. Mr. Speaker, I will now turn my attention to community amenities and I recognise something that really makes me smile it is Hurricane Tomas Relief Fund but I notice next to that funds from that relief, Emergency Relief Fund would be used to do work on [interjection] no, I took some notes there, I didn’t put the page there but you can listen and follow, right. I am absolutely sure that if what I am saying is not the truth then somebody is going to stop me. But the funds from that, Mr. Speaker, is really according to what I notice here would be used to carry out extensive work retrofitting from community centers. What I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that I am hoping that that Hurricane Tomas Relief Fund is going to go a little further than just retrofitting community centers, because there

are a number of people in St. Vincent and the Grenadines who have sustained damages from Hurricane Tomas.....

DR THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:so that I can perhaps explain the various components of the Tomas rehabilitation. Mr. Speaker, the following funds are available for Tomas post Tomas Relief Fund US\$5 million from the World Bank that is a loan, a soft loan and US\$12 million from the Caribbean Development Bank. The \$12 million from the Caribbean Development Bank covers not just Post Tomas but Post April Flash Flood reconstruction. These monies, Mr. Speaker, are across several ministries addressing different items and many of them they will find for instance under Public Works under the Ministry of Works. In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, there are monies which have been granted and which have been applied and monies are still being applied through a state agency the Housing and Land Development Corporation, indeed through the Housing and Land Development Corporation in excess of \$20 million have been spent since Tomas on the rehabilitation of houses, the rebuilding of houses and right at the moment as I speak we are addressing the issue of the 17 families which are still in shelters in the post April floods, landslides. So there are different elements, I think my Honourable friend is looking at one dimension of the programme which part of it deals with the emergency shelters because what we have to do, Mr. Speaker, is to build resilience so that in times of emergencies we can have the reasonable facilities for persons to be in. One of the problems with some emergency shelters, they are not as sound as they ought to be and the World Bank expert who had come had specifically raised with me and members of my staff issues relating to building some of that resilience, so I want to if my friend, my Honourable friend, had looked at all the dimensions of the programme he would see that that there are all these elements across different ministries and with different components.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Thank you very much for that interjection. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the interjection of the Honourable Prime Minister. But I am just highlighting the fact that there are still many people who sustained damages and the economic situation of these people, Mr. Speaker, will not allow them in any way to more or less have their homes indemnified. A lot of these houses, Mr. Speaker, are still exposed to the elements and I am hoping [interjection] well Mr. Prime Minister, I am simply saying that I wish the Government will go a further and this being the Christmas season I am hoping that we are going to see a little bit of Christmas spirit and that you are going to understand the plight of those people who are going to be experiencing a wet Christmas if it rains whereas.....

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have 10 minutes to conclude.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: ...anyway the seed has been sown so I hope that it is going to be in your heart to do something.

I just want to move on a little further Mr. Speaker, I want to use the last couple of minutes to look at issues pertaining to poverty alleviation and for your benefit you can find it on Page 183. We are looking at the Result Indicator and on the top of Page 183 Mr. Speaker, it says;

“At least 20 poor and indigent persons empowered to make use of income earning opportunities by December 31st.”

And that was an objective and another one I might add, when you look next to it, it says;

“Funding for this initiative is not yet released”.

So you have a Government that is concerned about lifting 20 indigent poor people out of their economic woe for 2011, but not a single cent has been used to lift those poor people and ensure that there is a better quality of life for them. Also it says;

“Continue to execute the community Poverty Alleviation projects to benefit poor communities throughout St. Vincent and the Grenadines by December 31, 2011”.

It says:

“The Ministry continued to work with families to become more self-sufficient. This initiative is ongoing”.

But Mr. Speaker, *“Funding for this initiative is not yet released.”*

I believe that you know, it is said if something work for you one time you must do it again and if it work for you the second time, do it on a continuous basis. I have no doubt in my mind, Mr. Speaker, that poverty is one of those factors responsible for the Unity Labour Party remaining in office and I believe it is a concerted effort to ensure that people do not have a better quality of life because, Mr. Speaker, when people have had to suffer for four years plus because they

are living in poverty and then just before the elections they are given a handout, they go and vote for them. That is what has been happening, that is the *Modus Operandi* of this administration that is why, Mr. Speaker, I believe that no money has been released for that purpose.

I turn to sports, Mr. Speaker, I heard, and you know we are West Indian people and Vincentians are no exception. We love cricket a lot and I recognise the fact that we may well be having three one-day matches against Australia here, I would be happy if that comes. I have to say that, because, Mr. Speaker, I notice there is an allocation of \$800,000 for work on the Arnos Vale Sporting Complex particularly Arnos Vale one, the netball complex and so on. But when you examine that particular area, particularly I am speaking to the benefit of the Honourable Minister of Sports, and I hope that you are going to take what I am saying seriously, I have been with regional teams and international teams before and I know how important they take their practice, in fact Mr. Speaker, if the practice ground, if the nets are not of an acceptable standard they are not going to practice nor will they be playing the game. I am saying this, Mr. Speaker, because I heard the Honourable Prime Minister when he was announcing this some weeks back, encouraging people to be in a state of readiness particularly those with respect, are in the hotels and so on, that kind of business to be ready. But if we are not concerned, Mr. Speaker, we might well be setting these people up, because there is a situation with respect to the nets at Arnos Vale, when it rains even if you use the covers to protect the ground, the pitch, the practice area it does not necessarily means that water is not going to seep and I need you to go back to Arnos Vale and look at the proximity of the shooting range to the nets, I have looked at it and other people have complained that if there is heavy flooding, it does not matter how many times you want to cover the nets that there is the possibility of seepage. So I am saying to you, I am only saying this, you understand so that we can have cricket here and hope that some benefit will be derived from the Australians coming to St. Vincent and the Grenadines, I am just saying that.

So Mr. Speaker, the final thing I want to talk about is the Campden Park Playing Field, there is an allocation of \$200,000 for that. In the 2011 Estimates we had an allocation of \$1.8 million for two playing fields, Campden Park Playing Field and the Chili Playing Field; to date not a single cent has been spent on the Campden Park Playing Field, but I came to the Parliament and I asked questions and I was told that its going to be done. It was never done but I am seeing this allocation of \$200,000 so the amount in my opinion has been drastically reduced. So Mr. Speaker, I am hoping, I am going to be watching this project to see whether or not it will

become reality or if it would once again be what we have come to know a ULP for all talk and no action.

Mr. Speaker, finally I want to take the opportunity to wish the people of South Leeward a Merry Christmas. I know in the context of things Christmas really does not seem to have anything called merry in it but I am do hoping, Mr. Speaker, when we read the book of Lamentation there is a Verse that says;

“It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed because his compassion fails not, they are new every morning, great is thy faithfulness”.

And I believe it is the mercies of the Lord that is keeping a lot of people, not only in South Leeward but in St. Vincent and the Grenadines because things are extremely hard. Notwithstanding, Mr. Speaker, I want to encourage South Leeward folks particularly to remember Jehovah Jireh who is their provider and I believe he is going to come through for them.

Mr. Speaker I want to take the opportunity also to wish every Member of this Honourable House, both on the Opposition and the Government side a merry Christmas, even my Senator friends over there I want to wish you a very merry Christmas, you know why, because in the early days when an individual was an individual we used to hang out a little bit but he has really changed you know. Mr. Speaker, I also want to take the opportunity to say merry Christmas to you and your staff, Madam Clerk, wishing you all the best for the season also, you, Mr. Speaker, more especially because you are a friend of a friend and therefore I wish you good health and I wish you good success and I hope that 2012 we going to see some transformation and one way or the other the quality of life of the Vincentian people will be enhanced. Much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:I recognised you but the...

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSLAVES: Mr. Speaker, I think this is an appropriate time to take a brief suspension for Members convenience, we seek to return at 7:30, Mr. Speaker? I beg to move that this Honourable House do stand suspended until 7:30 for Members convenience.

Question put and agreed to.
House suspended until 7:30 p.m.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Pray be seated. When we took the break I recognised the Honourable Senator Baptiste and I ask you now to make your presentation.

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to make my contribution to this debate on the Estimates of Expenditure for the year 2012. Before I enter into my own deliberations on some of the figures pertaining to areas which I would like to concentrate on within the Ministry of National Mobilisation, Social Development etcetera, I will like to make a few preliminary remarks with respect to things I have heard about this exercise. But first of all I want to say that I still feel that in light of the seriousness of this work of looking at the Estimates I believe that better can still be done with respect to the time within which these Estimates had delivered to us on this of the Honourable House because I personally looked forward to studying them carefully and we get them on a Friday afternoon and we have to prepare for Finance Committee meeting for Monday morning it poses a difficulty and I don't want to think that it is an indication of any kind of scant regard for the importance of the work that has to be done. I know sometimes there are challenges, I really don't care for the arguments that come from claims that say that in the past it was like that, my thing is we are in the now and we should do better. Having said that I sat here and I listen to comments with respect to what should and shouldn't be looked at when debating the Estimates for the year to come and I was completely confused when it was suggested by some that we shouldn't really be looking at Result Indicators and I wish to say something about that and Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I speak from my own experience in the recent past as a Public Servant and it is clear to me....

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member arm...

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE: Yes

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: [Inaudible], I don't think anybody said that you shouldn't be looking at result indicators; I think the Member might have referred to Result Indicators for the previous year that we are actually debating in 2012 Estimates [inaudible] I think that was the point that was being made. So I don't think you can just...there was any talk about not looking at the Result Indicators. You see there is one of the things that one has got to safeguard that you do not debate the Estimates now and when you come back in the Budget Debate you

bring back the same kinds of argument that you debate here in the Estimates so you have to be very careful with that. I think that is what the person might have meant, thank you. Okay.

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I should have qualified myself because the Honourable Member in particular did go on to speak about the issue of the 2011 Estimates, however my point still holds and I will explain, in my training as a Public Servant, when we put together Estimates for the year to come and we go before the officials in the Ministry of Finance such as for example the Budget Director office, we have to be able to prove why we are requesting certain amounts for certain programmes for the year to come and one of the things that is done is a sort of analysis and reflection on what we have done in the past because the fact is if we are going to understand and justify why we are saying there is need to do certain things in the year to come we have to be able to show that we have used adequately and properly the allocations the year before for example and oftentimes there is need for comparison in order to assess the effectiveness and whether we need to change the amount for the year to come or whether we need to reduce it. So it is in this light that I say I found it difficult to appreciate that view and I believed I was trained well even by my own former PS and Director and I know that this is applicable to the Estimates Debate as well relevant and from time to time reflections on the past indicators in as far as they apply to justifications for future spending.

Now having made those comments I want to also reflect a bit on my observations with respect to the Estimates presentation and preparation because there are certain observations I would like to make in encouragement to the departments as they prepare. I observe what appears to be unnecessary mistakes, omissions and sometimes even things that can confuse and I will point out some when I am going through and it makes me wonder, it makes me reflect on the issue of the amount of preparation or the thoroughness with which not only they are put together but reviewed before coming into this document and being sent out to Honourable Members. As a student of the document when I look at some of the things I get the sense of a kind of haste, a kind of hurry do job, I see contradictions and I fear that is either genuine mistakes made or a case where there is perhaps some accepted truth that you know, we probably can't do some of these things anyway so we put down a figure, and I say this and I will ratify what I am saying when I go into the details which I will begin to do at this point.

I want to look at as I have indicated earlier some of the programs under the Ministry of National Mobilisation, Social Development, the Family etcetera and I observe that as many of my of my

colleagues did earlier but with specific reference to this Ministry, I observe that the total Estimates on the recurrent side for this Ministry does not differ largely from what was presented in 2011. This year a total \$29,246,803 has been allocated for the Ministry of Social Development and that amounts to just about 4.8 cents, just about 5cents of every dollar that would be spent in the whole of the recurrent expenditure budget based on my calculations, I take into consideration the total figure including Amortization and Sinking Fund just for the record. So let us say okay 5 cents for every dollar will go towards the Ministry of National Mobilisation whose mission is to engaged in social transformation, social empowerment, social protection, social justice, social development, youth and sports, and I point that out because I think it is significant when we are looking at issues of prioritization and you know the interest and the concern we show for some of these very important programs that are listed under this Ministry. When I go into detail looking at and I point out the programs that I wish to look at, Family Affairs program, number 302; Gender Affairs program, number 309; the Liberty Lodge Training Center program, number 310; Home Help for the elderly program, number 311; and the Crisis Center program, number 314. What do we see generally when we look at these programs in this Ministry. Under Family Affairs a majority of the allocation for this Ministry that is of the 29 million that has been allocated for recurrent expenditure for the Ministry of National Mobilisation, 18 million or 18.8 million has been allocated to the Family Affair division and the majority of that 18.8 million is for the public assistance program, sorry social welfare is the name of it, that involves that. And I notice that it is the same figure as 2011, \$17,535,000, this is a very important program no doubt we know that our people do need public assistance and I am happy to see the figure remains the same but I will have much more to say about it in the Budget. I also observe when I look at the Family Affairs Division Program which accounts to about 64 cents of every dollar that would be spent in this Ministry, so it has the largest amount of money going from the Ministry would be spent here in the Family Affairs Division, and like I said a large portion, almost all of that 64 cents is really to the Social Welfare Program.

Now when you look at the Result Indicators and I am speaking also about result indicators for the year 2012 I want to draw reference to Page 185 and I observe and it is not only under the Family Affairs Division, but I observe in other areas in this Ministry that two things; 1. Status update to indicators which do not relate at all to the indicators and like I said I wonder if it was a genuine mistake, this is the case with the crisis center indicators at the top of the page the first two bullets, Mr. Speaker, on Page 185 speak to indicators concerning the crisis center but when you look on the right the updates have absolutely nothing to do with the crisis centre indicators.

They speak about other things pertaining to parenting workshops and health session for men etcetera. So I just wanted to point out some of these things because I really it is an important document that is put together and we have to look carefully, we have to give sufficient time if that is the issue for review of the work that is done before it is sent out and to brought to this Honourable House as a report as it were to the House.

I also observe on Page 184, Page 184 that is the page just before and on other pages, the issue of and I have to say this again about Result Indicators and it has every bearing on the issue of your Estimates because if you are going to justify to the Ministry of Finance why you need this amount of money for this particular programme you have to be able to present indicators that are specific and measurable, you have to say conduct training, not just conduct training for so and so but contract four training sessions or five training sessions that will target this number of persons etcetera. It is important for looking back and assessing whether you have been accountable with the monies that where allocated to you for what you said you will do. I am looking at the whole professionalism you know the whole proper management of the programmes and so on because when we see monies put for certain things we want to know exactly, especially us on this studying the document, we want to know exactly what you are going to do that is why it is said that Result Indicators must be smart, that is specific, measurable, achievable, they must also be realistic and they must be time bound. So while some might be time bound in that they might say achieve this by this time they are sometimes not specific and measurable so when you tell me you are asking for this amount of money to do this indicator I am left with the question as to whether or not you really need this amount or whether you perhaps needed more because what you said you need to do in terms of the number of, let's say, training sessions will cost more, and if the result indicators do not reflect these features then it could be a problem in even guiding the relevant department in doing their work properly and I am making this point because I think it is important to the debate as well. I think it is very important to the exercise.

Let me move on to another programme, the Liberty Lodge Training Centre Programme, programme number 310 and this programme \$706,118 on the recurrent expenditure side has been allocated, this is about 2.4 cents if you could think of that, 2 cents of every dollar that would be spent in this Ministry going to the Liberty Lodge Training Centre, Boys training centre, and again when I look at the Result Indicators, but before I say that let me say something about the capital estimates concerning this programme because I do not want to ignore that, apart from the 706,000 on the recurrent side we also have on Page 616 under Capital Estimates,

and it is item three on the box, 'upgrading of Liberty Lodge Boys Training Center', you will observe that it falls under Capital Expenditure Revenue, but when you go over to Page 617 on the right hand side you see under the remarks column it said, 'this project is under local loan'. Then when I look down at local loans, which is on the bottom of Page 616 'Capital Expenditure Local Loans' there is absolutely no mention what so ever of the upgrading of the Liberty Lodge Boys Training Center. So we are told okay don't look for it under revenue look under local loans but when you look at local loans it is not there. So the question is, was that a mistake or will this project actually be done what they plan to do under Capital Estimates, because there is nothing, there is absolutely no provision for borrowing a local loan to deal with it, it is not there.

If I were to go back to Page 209, it will speak a little bit more about the programme having made my observation about the Capital Estimates. Again, Mr. Speaker, my apology I have to go back to Capital Estimates. On Page 618, there is reference again to this programme, it is in the box on Page 18, the second item, and it is under Capital Expenditure Grants, 'upgrading of Liberty Lodge Boys Training Center' and it is hoped we are expecting to get \$220,000 from the Republic of China on Taiwan for this project. Now on the right page which is 619 it tells us that the aim is to construct a new building to house a kitchen and dining room. My concern here is that I understand that when grants are being sought and given by international agencies and countries it is expected that there will be some measure of local counterpart funding. And my concern is that if we cannot come up with this because a lot of local counterpart funding is expected to come from a surplus that you expect to make, if you have surplus you can provide local counterpart funding for projects, if you don't have, where are you going to get the money. Already it is not under local loans. So I am just expressing my concerns about because I understand the importance of the programme and I am glad that there is money allocated to it albeit is slight drip from what was there in 2011, but I am concerned about whether or not this project will be realised based on what I just pointed out.

Now let us go to another programme, let us look at the Home Help for the elderly programme and under this programme we observe that a total of \$1,091,372 or about 4cents of every dollar spent in the Ministry will go to this programme. This programme's objective is to provide urgent and meaningful care to the elderly poor. I often hear from the opposite side how much the Opposition was against this programme when it was first introduced but I am very concerned about what I see presented here when I compare with the indicators for this programme. First of all I have to make the observation that up until November 22nd, the sitting

of this Honourable House on November 22nd, the Result Indicators for this programme for 2011 have not been achieved, the very Honourable Minister indicated so and it is on the Hansard. None of the 30 persons that they intended to train and employ, that is Home Help Care Providers, nobody was trained for 2012, none employed, 2011 pardon. Yes, though because that was the indicator to train a further 30, so the objectives were not achieved. Also the periodical assessment among the beneficiaries, I believe the target was 100 was not done. [Interjection] Well maybe it was done since November 22nd, is that what you are saying? [Interjection] Okay, the Minister just said it was done since that sitting when he said it has not been done. Here we have a situation where for the year 2012 I want to look particularly at the objective with respect to training more providers, Home Help Care Providers, you see last time I debated this issue I was concerned that the number of Home Help Care Providers that were targeted for training when you looked at the training allocation it did not seem to add up. Why? The objective was train an additional 30 yet the training budget was cut from 55,000 for 2012 to 10,000 for 2011 and I could not understand how there was intention to train more in 2011 but with a smaller training budget. Now today, and perhaps the same explanation would be given, now today I am observing something else, what is it this time, is like you flip around the situation. You indicate on Page 210, that you are going to train not more than 15 new Home Help Care Providers, so you have intention of training not more than 15 new providers yet your budget has gone back up, your training budget to 55,000.

I am trying to understand what is before me, Mr. Speaker and I am saying if you are going to train less, I mean when you say not more than 15, that could be 2, it could be 3, it could be 0. The point is you were more specific in your language the last time, you said train an additional 30, this time you are not so specific but in addition to that your objective to train less persons from last time is requiring a bigger training budget. So perhaps there are other things that are going to be done with that bigger training budget than what is being expressed here, I don't know. I am reading and I am trying to understand, I am simply pointing out what appears to be contradictions and unexplained postings of figures and that is why I spoke earlier about having to reflect on the Result Indicators not just for the year to come but of the past, because it tells a story. So the question remains, is it a contradiction, is it an error, is it a sort of haywire putting figures not being sure of what will happen, not being sure if we will really get the money to do it but we have to put down something, what is it? Maybe the Honourable Minister will answer in due time, but it is my duty and my responsibility to point these things out, because we are asked to study this document, also it will be nice if he could explain, that is the Honourable Minister because I reflected on his answer to a question in the Hansard where he indicated that the salary

per month for a Home Help Care Worker is about \$968 and when I examine the wages figure for 2012 I notice that it is increased by about \$36,000, but when I divide that by 12 and then I divide it by the monthly salary it is only telling me that three more Home Help Care Providers will be employed. That is what I got when I divided it, this is why I said, not more than 15, could be anything under 15, because when I worked it out it came down to only about three more unless again there is some other allocation somewhere that I am not seeing here under this programme that is going to take care of the payment, the salary, because it says train and employ or train for employment so I really wanted to point these things out.

Now, I will move straight to the Crisis Centre, a very important programme indeed no doubt we on this side of the House we recognise it when it was brought to the Parliament first when I first debated these Estimates for the first time in January this year I spoke about it, and I think I speak for Vincentians when I say that an institution like this its importance is seen now more than ever because when we reflect on the kinds of crimes against women and children, men too, but granted we see in a special way a lot of violent crimes against women and we domestic violence, problems and issues and I think when we reflect on that more people you might find them talking about the need for a Crisis Centre more and more these days. So while I am heartened to see it again in the Estimates for 2012 and the figure allocated is \$192,864 and there is another figure on the capital side which I will point to. While I am happy to see it I am concerned about the fact that and again I will go back to the Hansard because I do not know if by this time 13th of December it is operational but I know up to the last time I asked in this Honourable House about it, it was not yet operational and I believe a few weeks ago there was a story in a newspaper saying it will soon be operational however the fact remains the Result Indicators which were stated for the year 2011 the majority thereof and real issue which is the operationalisation of the center so that it could actually start to be benefit the beneficiaries that still had not been the case up to that time.

Now I have already pointed out the fact that you don't see the status update in the Indicators because the Indicators on the left have nothing to do with what is on the right. I also need to point out...to ask the question and to make the point that when I look at the fact that it is in the Budget again for this year and the Indicator speak to things that are repeated....sorry for next year....and the Indicators speak that are repeated again for next year, it makes me ask me ask the question whether or not the persons preparing this whether they knew that they were not going to operationalise it in 2011 even though they put it there or whether it was a case where they wanted to but the money just wasn't there to do it. It is a very important point because, I

am going to go to the Capital side, I am looking at Page 616 again, and its Capital Expenditure Local Loans and it is the first item, Crisis Centre Phase two, and we have \$90,000 allocated for it, in other words the Government is hoping to borrow Local Loans \$90,000 to do what, go on Page 617 and you will see it says, “for retrofitting landscaping and fencing of the Crisis Center”. But the Result Indicators for 2011 had said that this the Crisis Center should have been operationalised by something like August of 2011, so how could you now be telling me that you still have to complete a project related to the retrofitting, landscaping and fencing giving the impression that you have to do that first before it could become operational. But you already said this year that it should have been operational this year so I question the thoroughness of the preparation, the rationale, what is really going on, when can we really expect, how are the people listening to us supposed to view our planning, the planning of the Government. Are they supposed to question whether or not you are being truthful when you write things done or your capacity to really do what you say you will do, or you are just guessing and hoping because you are not sure that you will be able to do it because you are hoping you will find the money. These are the questions that are asked. One might fear in indeed that the Crisis Centre is in a crisis. But my point is your Result Indicators, the Result Indicators put here not by me, Mr. Speaker, but by the relevant officials obviously sanctioned by their Ministers who are here representing the Ministries, those Result Indicators and the realities are what show that there is a problem. Not my questions, I question based on what is here and this is a serious matter because I really want to see the Crisis Centre operational this 2012, it is too important of an institution and in the Budget I will speak at length about it, it is too important of a social institution for us to be find ourselves in a position, God forbid, December 2012 when we are looking at 2013 Estimates where we still don’t have it operational and I want to point that out.

Now there is just about one other programme that I would like to look at and before I do that eh, you see sometimes we are so consumed with playing politics that we don’t even remember the very things that we say and have said because I sat in this Honourable House during a Sitting in May and I posed a question to the Honourable Minister of National Mobilisation, Social Development about the Crisis Centre and its operationalisation and at the time his answer to me was:

“The Crisis Centre is expected to be launched by the latest August 31st this year and one of the main prerequisites after the launch will be the training of the staff and then the centre will be ready for operation by September 2011”.

So you when you give such an undertaking and commitment and okay granted you didn't get to do it earlier but you answered then and there [Inaudible], you said well okay, look we are going to have it by September. When you give such undertakings but I am here now in December 13th seeing in the Estimates for 2012 but you still have retrofitting and so on to do and that is only going to be completed in 2012 and the implication is that it would be operational when those things are in place. When I have to be here now seeing this in the Estimates I have to in looking back myself what really were you saying in May. Did you not know that these things needed to be done? Why then did you say it would have been launched by August and operational by September? The point about it is Result Indicators must be realistic, they must be achievable and I believe ... **[break in transmission]**... programmes because of the shortage of cash, the shortage of money to carry out the programmes and it is sad, if Members on the other side have to sit down there and try to make it sound as if you know, like it is a bed of roses because I was public servant I know what it is like to go before the relevant authorities and say oh we want this and to hear oh you can't get it because money ain't dey and so and so etcetera. So you know what I am talking about, it makes no sense for us to pretend the point about it is this is an important service that the people of this country need and we should not set them up. I personally would receive calls from women in situations and I believe if they had a place to go for some temporary security they could be better off. Who knows perhaps some who have gone on could have perhaps their lives could have been saved, had there been any such centre or even more shelters, who knows.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if my Honourable friend may just give way, we are all very Christian people...I am wondering if [inaudible] my Honourable friend, the Senator would wish to reconsider people who are well intentioned, Public Servants, Ministers who work under difficult circumstances, that we try to set up people, really? You know set up people that is [inaudible].

HONOURABLE SENATOR ANESIA BAPTISTE: Mr. Speaker, let it be clearly understood that I am in no way accusing Public Servants of setting up people, the fact of the matter is Public Servants in their senior positions will express wanting to do certain things because they understand the importance of it, they are technical people but these are sanctioned or not by the relevant authorities in the Ministry of Finance so at the end of the day the [Inaudible] would in fact the Minister of Finance and I am saying if you give the people the assurance that these things can be done, but then because of bad management

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is saying that the Minister of Finance has set up the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, there is no evidence of that, it is a pejorative statement and it reflects on the character of the Minister of Finance, and [interjection] I am not speaking to you.....

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: [Striking the gavel]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: You may wish to come on your bully boy tactics, I wouldn't tolerate it...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Just a minute Prime Minister [interjection] there, it may be that she might be giving an opinion but you cannot come in here and make any kind of opinion. Nobody can just come and make an opinion.....

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: [Inaudible]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: listen to me the Member stand up on a Point of Order, you have a right to let him state his Point of Order. I am saying that you have a right to let him state his Point of Order and you are also taking over other people's fight, you are doing that all the time...

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: The Honourable Member has a right to an opinion, Mr. Speaker...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:...but you are taking over other people's fight , allow the gentleman and let the lady respond..

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: ... I, I have a right.....

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: ... so you have the same bully attitude...

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: Well, one bully.....

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Well stop it....

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: One bully knows how to bully.....

DR THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, I am not questioning the right of someone to hold an opinion but if you hold an opinion in this Honourable House, which cast aspersions on the character and motives of any Honourable Member that is a matter which requires a withdrawal by this Honourable Member, that is the only point I am making. I thought that she was saying generally speaking, and I was making the point for Public Servants and for Honourable Members here that collectively we set up people and in this particular case disadvantaged poor and marginalised people. She said no, he is not talking about Public Servants and I allowed her because she was there going through her process and she says that it is now the Minister of Finance who set people up and that is, Mr. Speaker, the question I am raising the Point of Order on.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I am in agreement with the Honourable Prime Minister and I am asking the Honourable Member to withdraw that statement.

HONOURABLE SENATOR ANESIA BAPTISTE: Mr. Speaker, I do not have any difficulty with withdrawing the words ‘set up’. However I maintain, because this was my true intention, I maintain that when you say you are going to do something and you raised people’s expectations because this is what happens in reality. They expect the thing to come on-stream because you said it will, now when looking back and looking on.....

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Alright, okay, please, I have asked you to withdraw the word, please.

HONOURABLE SENATOR ANESIA BAPTISTE: Yes, I have, I have said that Mr. Speaker, I said that I have no problem with withdrawing the words ‘set up’ and I withdraw them.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: And you have eight minutes to conclude your debate.

HONOURABLE SENATOR ANESIA BAPTISTE: Thank you. I withdraw the word ‘set up’ but I maintain that when you raise expectations based on things you promise and when one studies the books one sees that certain things clearly show that there could not have been a realistic expectation that this thing would have been completed. Let me give an example, if you look on Page 192, under Crisis Centre, bullet number two;

“Develop client rehabilitative modules by March 31, 2012”.

This for 2012, now this bullet was not at all the indicators for 2011 yet in 2011 one of the indicators said that you would assess rehabilitative strategies with clients to ensure they are 80% successful. How were you going to assess rehabilitative strategies in 2011 when you are only now for 2012 planning to develop rehabilitative modules, is not that making me wonder if you were realistic or if you hadn't already known that you weren't going to get this thing done? It questions, it begs the whole issue of preparation and thoroughness in thinking about these things and planning. And these things that are in the estimates reflects what I am saying, this is not something I have invented, and that is the point I am making. With the rest of the time I have left I will just touch briefly, I know I will have another opportunity in the Budget to flesh out more of these things but I will touch briefly on the Gender Affairs Department, simply to acknowledge what is there for that area again, it is \$221,432 for 2012 for Gender Affairs and that is just about 0.75 cents, if you could imagine that, less than a cent of every dollar that is to be expected to spend in the Ministry of National Mobilisation and it was under Gender Affairs in particular that I made the observation about the lacking in features of result indicators that are necessary for us to appreciate the allocation because if you look on Page 192 we would observe how there is no measurement, Page 192, in about three of the indicators for 2012 you would observe the lack of measurableness for lack of a better expression in the indicators so for example an indicator would say continue to develop and administer career orientation programmes for teen parents during school breaks by August 31 2012, but it does not tell you how many teen parents are being targeted.

The one above talks about implementing training in life and social skills programmes for young men and young women in four communities but you don't hear how many training sessions, you don't hear how many to be reached. And again I say these things are important for the assessment for you to be able to determine the success and even to be able to determine whether or not the allocation you put was sufficient and whether or not you need to increase it the next year for example, so we have to do things properly, Mr. Speaker and I am encouraging the relevant authorities these are not things that are foreign to them because like I said, I was a public servant and I was taught these things.

So we need to pay more careful attention. I hope that these things would be done, but I do not have a lot of confidence that many of them will be done simply because when I consider that the estimates of expenditure for 2011 were not very different from the estimates for 2012 and

when I consider that under that context some of these programmes were not fulfilled as they should have been, I have to wonder whether or not with a similar budget we are going to be able to fulfill some of them again in 2012 and this is only based on the history. So I really hope for example that the Home Health Care Providers programme could really see the training of the number that is expected and I really hope that these elderly poor among us can get more assistance. When you outlined and say you are going to train more, I want to think it is because you in yourself recognise that the programme needs some more help.

Wrapping up Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank God for having given me the opportunity again to debate these estimates in the House of Parliament. I count it a serious responsibility and I count it a solemn one as well to be truthful and sincere in service and in representation for the people and I also want to, in parting, say that I know that 2012 would not be easy but I want to appeal to people to hold on strong and seek God's face, because you cannot give up, you cannot throw your hands in the air, you cannot become despaired and depressed and do things you should not do. We all have to be strong and we have to hold on to one another as the Vincentian people that we all are even before any party colours.

I also want to extend New Year's greetings to the people of West St. George especially, my fellow West St. Georgians; I live in Belair, and also to all of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. I know there is some people who celebrate Christmas, I personally do not, but I want to advise you to be temperate in your eating and your drinking and be safe, have a safe entrance into the year 2012. I am much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Central Kingstown. Oh I thought you were moving on a point of order, because the Honourable Member was still on her feet when you stood up.

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to make this contribution. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to make my contribution to the estimates for 2012. Mr. Speaker, he is not in the room here at this moment, but my firm belief that psychologically at least the Honourable Prime Minister is somewhere on the Damascus road pay to Bethlehem for redemption.

I say this, Mr. Speaker, on the basis of his sobriety in presenting this year's estimates. I think the Honourable Member for the Northern Grenadines did pick up theme today Mr. Speaker, and I want to add to that that in a most unusual way the Honourable Prime Minister did take some

time in framing or as the Honourable Member for South Central Windward would say, contextualizing his presentation. In the end though, Mr. Speaker, at least as I understood him, he established that our estimates for this year was being presented against a background one international conditions and I add to that a depressed world economy, issues of sovereign debt, runaway inflation, pension issues, high unemployment rate and a seeming general world restlessness clearly more so in some parts than in others, that is the international condition which impacts us by making less money available for us here in these parts whether it is by way of tourism or the purchase of our goods.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Prime Minister identified regional circumstances, he did highlight them but I suspect we can pay our intrinsic vulnerabilities I think the Honourable South Central Member if we would remember also spoke about that how small island state matter which present the unique challenges or its issues etc. and you cannot argue with that those are our realities that is factual. And thirdly he reminded us of the impact of natural disasters, Tomas being the greatest national disasters more recent times and perhaps accounting for the state of Parliament tonight or the configuration. Of course, Mr. Speaker, we also have had our bone and our fair share of flash floods with most recently fires to take care of, set back at the financial complex where we have to redo census information, so we know of these three things, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we can conclude from the above, the international, the regional and the natural disasters phenomena that these are impositions on us as a people. However, Mr. Speaker, I contend that what the Prime Minister did not address, in fact, what he chooses to ignore are what I refer to as the debilitating effects of self-inflicted wounds. Much of the problems we have in St. Vincent, we have imposed it on ourselves and that is why we can postpone to the budget the virtual double Cabinet that we have, the hangers on, several sets of consultants advisers and waste that are burn, not to talk about corruption.

Mr. Speaker, this long pause of the Prime Minister was in fact the appropriate point of departure for the Leader of the Opposition. In short, contrast without proposition the Honourable Prime Minister, he quite rightfully emphasized the economic background and he indicated the last three years of negative growth in our economy and people think that this is something to be taken for granted but negative growth is precisely what it is, Mr. Speaker. For the last three years the national cake has been getting smaller and smaller to feed the same mouth and perhaps even more mouth and if in fact some people have been getting more than their fair share of that pie, of that cake, then the corollary is that some people are getting smaller and

smaller portions to be more accurate none at all. So negative growth is not something to be slighted it means in general a reduced quality of life for very many Vincentians all around, you know it, I know, members over there on the other side they face it as representatives of constituents on a daily basis. He went on, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition that is, Member for East Kingstown to speak about the cash deficit on the recurrent side leading to counterpart financing to the capital budget. I do not have to repeat the position that is precisely why I had raised the question in the last parliament, I moving from the recurrent now to the capital as to the truthful nature of the other in which we have listed some 102 or something like that millions dollars we will receive this year when we know we have never raised more than \$12 million. I mean it is a dishonesty of tragic proportions, because we know it is just not going to happen. So estimates are faster but real, we know that and had he answered the question in the last session of the parliament, today he would not have been able to look me straight face now and say that this is going to happen, because if up to November it is not going to happen, I do not see what miracles are taking place in December.

We have serious cash deficit. The Leader of the Opposition also highlighted our growing unemployment and finally and again this position was taken up I think by the Honourable Senator Frederick, an absence of any real stimulus to the private sector. Mr. Speaker, but one of our propositions that had we been in government by this time we would have floated development bonds to put the country back to work and to restore confidence in our business community. By \$30 million to \$40 million whatever the accurate figures, we do not know for a fact to make sure that more jobs were created and we would have more investor confidence in the country, \$20 million, thank you. [Interjection] oh you are speaking about the 20,000 jobs, oh thank you; we will get that in January.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for East Kingstown summarised and other Members on this side echoed that sentiment that in a real sense our budget this year was much of the same really could not find any difference with that of last year. Now that by itself as an observation is not really neutral because if it is much of the same of a good thing we had no problem, but if it in fact so much resembles what we had last year in 2011 and in 2010 then it is simply saying that we are doing very little to change the existential circumstances of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

So Mr. Speaker, I was not surprised that like a stern principal admonishing a truant student, one who had not done his homework he reminded us and the Honourable Prime Minister directly that fiscal discipline means everything to us. We have little, in fact no control over the

monetary side politics economics in our part. And to support his advice, Mr. Speaker, in fact to grant to give his authority to his position so that he did not say, says who? He cited the IMF report which is not reflecting at all in the estimates for this year. So there is more than a heavy dose, is an unrealistic approach to this estimates preparation. Since it appears not to intend to bring remedies to the Malaise in the economy.

So Mr. Speaker, having addressed the position, the Honourable Prime Minister and his approach and juxtaposing on that of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition. Let us return to the themes of the Prime Minister's address which resonated with me as remedies of sorts, home grown remedies, Prime Ministerial remedy. I heard him to have said we need healthier lives to be more productive. Honourable Minister Slater agrees with that although he would not go back to his practice. He spoke about a call to raise the work effort of all public servants. He spoke about a more efficacious manner of doing things, he emphasized the need to improve qualitative output and he warned that we should cut out waste and be more cost conscious and finally, Mr. Speaker, out of his Pandora box of remedies exercise restraint on the current account side. I am not quarrelling with any of those observations, recommendations, prescriptions, call them what you may from the Honourable Prime Minister, because in fact they are all needed to carry this country forward.

Mr. Speaker, on this occasion the Honourable Prime Minister did not use the language here, but in the Finance Committee Meeting yesterday he enjoined with me and he may disagree there, with the call that we should do more with less, and if he means that from his heart then he does in fact have my support because that is critical, very, very critical for us getting ourselves out of this quandary, this negative growth and forecasted negative growth that we find ourselves.

Mr. Speaker, what one gathers from all of the above and this is my summary of all of these things, work ethics, efficacious manner, qualitative output, cutting out waste, cost consciousness restraint, I summarise all that as a call for greater productivity in this nation state of ours. Let us look at the input-output relationships and measures which we continuously strive to maximize on the output.

So Mr. Speaker, how does this good talk square with the Estimates and its provisions, doing more with less? I go, Mr. Speaker to page 377 of the 2008 Estimates. We would not have it here, Mr. Speaker, but it is to support the point on productivity that I want to make, and we have there in 2008 you know, Mr. Speaker, 3, 4 years ago that we would establish and operate the national productivity centre and we went on to say in our remark, the institutional

framework and the charter of the centre were prepared that is, were ready to go with this national productivity centre, however, the project is on hold since funds were not voted in 2007 for its implementation. So here is a country that knows what it needs to do, to get itself out of difficulty, do more with less, be more productive, let us set up a productivity centre, but for Thy Kingdom come we would not vote the money 2008 you know, Mr. Speaker. I mean I am sure you are uncomfortable with that, you are not happy about that.

Fast forward Mr. Speaker, to 2012 on the question of productivity because in 2008 we could not find the monies, when we agreed that we need more productivity and as we go through the estimates, Mr. Speaker, on the national productivity centre we see a “q naught zero” as in nothing and we go across to the remarks column and it says, this project is discontinued. My interpretation is that we no longer have an interest in productivity even though all those societies that are getting themselves out of this quandary are ramping up productivity in their country but not our public policy. So Mr. Speaker, that does not give me confidence that we are serious about this thought.

Mr. Speaker, this project which is being discontinued will cause us to pay a great price in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Mr. Speaker, truthfully speaking, you knows it is not an easy time for any of us in here to be parliamentarians. My colleagues on the other side know that, patriot here on this side face the music. At times it resembles we cruising between a rock and a hard place and I do not envy for a moment and I hope I come across not arrogantly by any stretch imagination, but closely tied to the reality of what we are dealing with because I said that my colleagues could tell them that I say, let us not be too strident in our estimates presentation, because have we been in government we would have had to face the same difficult decisions.

But let me state categorically, Mr. Speaker, that on this side of the House and speaking for myself, we do not want a single public servant paid off, no nurse, no policeman, no customs officer, no office attendant, no driver, no civil servant, because life is hard, tough and rough and so we cannot have any quarrels on the recurrent side with the allocation for maintaining and keeping those who are now employed in the employment of the..., I mean it is heart-wrenching to think of what we hear about Greece of laying off 100,000 public servants, I means that is a recipe ... but you do not have to make a decision like that if you are government. You dig a hole and do not come out from it? I mean, I do not even know if you can lay off a 1000 in St. Vincent which politician could walk the street the next day much less to think about 2000; or

3000. We want to keep them; we have to do what we can to keep them. We agreed on those things that is a reasonable position.

So you may argue, Mr. Speaker, you may argue that it is better to have a job than no job at all. In fact, if I could make a smaller side I was at the Heritage Square Sunday Night for a short moment and I heard Minister Stephens, South Windward is the constituency is that so, Stephenson, you were drawing attention to the fact that even oil rich Trinidad and Tobago had been forecasted to have a difficult time in 2012 and I am sure I am stating you quite accurate. And all of us know Trinidad and Tobago is richer than the rest of the Caribbean put together and your fear was that if Trinidad and Tobago was contemplating the laying off of public servants, who in St. Vincent and the Grenadines or in any event we ought to be glad and thankful for small mercies that we can keep what we have. I do not have much quarrels with that save and to accept to say there is a difference between laying off and not being hired in the first case, because a 20% to 25% unemployment our problems many more greater than what Trinidad experience in that too many of our young restless people do not jobs. I am sure all you, all of us want to have wants to have jobs opportunities created by the...

And I say that and have that discussion, Mr. Speaker, because when the Honourable Prime Minister indicates that whose skilful and negotiations last Friday, he was able to get Union Leaders to agree that there would be no wage increases in 2012. It is a tough task, but it might also be a realistic task. It might ask, but it is also a realistic task because no money nah dey and you can't spend what you do not have. Well I say that to make the point that there at least he is in sync with what the IMF is saying and arguing that is, we are in difficult times, we are in tough times, let us try and manage and pinch what we have as best we can.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: May I ask if my honourable friend will give way?

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: You are just young and restless. You mean you get a little five minutes nap you restore yourself and coming in.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: No, no, no, no, I was listening.

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: What is your point of order, you are going to have a chance to rebut, sit and take in the lessons nah.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I was not...

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: You want me to sit?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Yes. Mr. Speaker, I just want to correct my friend from Central Kingstown. He said, our Honourable friend, he said that I am a neighbour of everyone and therefore a friend of everyone. If I am wrong, Mr. Speaker, in that regard I am wrong with St. Paul, Jews and Gentile. I did not say, Mr. Speaker that the Union Leaders said that they agree not to have a salary increase in 2012. What I did say, was that in respect of the 3% for 2011, when we reach June 2012, we will have a meeting to see whether we are in a position to pay the 2011 as of January 2011 and that we will have the discussion then as to whether there can be any increases for the year 2012 and I also said, Mr. Speaker, that the Union Leaders were the Teachers Union, the Police Welfare Association, the CTAW and the NWM, they said, yes they agree with that proposition, but the head of the Public Service Union said, they have to consult with members. I just want to have what I said accurately stated. That is all. Mr. Speaker, I am always unto facts. We can deal with opinions afterwards, so long as we have the major facts correct.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Prime Minister, and before you..., I was recollecting on that statement, but I know the Honourable Member usually takes copious notes, so I say I might be wrong so I say, let me not challenge him. I know he takes a lot of notes. I just like to recognise that.

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: Mr. Speaker...,

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Yes, because the Young and Restless starts then and you would not be able to compete with it. With Young and Restless that is why he [laughter]

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: Well in fairness to him, he said, you know boy, leave that to 'Gomery' you know [laughter] you know he say that. Well I thought that was the inference, I thought that was the inference. Anyhow, as the original bad boy of the Parliament I am glad that you have taken your seat. As long as I am in politics I will remember that.

Mr. Speaker, I take the embellishment and what he said is accurate, but I mean the same thing, because they *ain't* go get no money anyhow, so it amounts to that and the Leader of the Opposition in fact did say that. There is a liberal story but is wishful thinking. I will remind you in June, I will be here June next year, I know. I am saying what you said you said [interruption] good, but you *ain't* go beat me off me neck.

Mr. Speaker, they will get their increments, in fact we will also get our increment too, so that is sort a kind of a good news, but Mr. Speaker, tough times are ahead, not just for public servants but for all Vincentians. The Honourable Prime Minister highlighted that four of his ministries consume nearly 80 percent of the estimates. That is correct? I have the correct ministries?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Yes, it said on the capital side

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: On the capital side.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: 70.3%.

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: 70.3%?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Yes, but there were four functional classifications a 77 percent.

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: So 70; 75; 80 percent helps to make my point namely we got to guard against putting the horse before the cart. That is why I am working with you, you know because when it comes from your mouth it makes my case a little bit easier. Well that is the problem because [interruption] that is all right, do not forget I am the night watcher. You feel because you are on this Damascus road to Bethlehem you going get

redemption, the road to Damascus that is where he is? He is on the road to Damascus? Oh, I see.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make the point though and I say so in all seriousness, because in management, in the field of management style there is always a strong reference what is referred to as the Pareto Principle and people have heard me speak on it in this parliament before and I am sure other members are familiar, otherwise refer to as the 80/20 rule and what it basically said in many instances 20 percent of the activities use 80 percent of the results, let me just give a quick case of this fact, if you go to VINLEC, 20 percent of VINLEC's customers generates 80 percent of their income. If you go to any of the commercial banks you will find the same thing, 20 percent of their customers generate 80 percent of their business. When we look..., and the government I think had an innovation this year in the Estimates presentation in terms of the functional classification and we will pick up on that and it is very useful and it is a good best practice. It is a good best practice.

But what we need to pay attention to in that regard, Mr. Speaker and the consideration that I am raising is that however we twist it and turn it the approach still resembles a certain upside down house, beautiful rooms, marble floors but an uncertain foundation. We are not anchored. Minister Saboto Caesar for example said, his Ministry of Tourism which I think is still the strongest money earner for the country in foreign exchange, over \$200 million that is what you bring in, I do not know. You use to be there, you still there, you reach \$300 as yet? We left you at two hundred and something, have you been able to go up or you came down? [Interruption] you are going up when the airport start, but right now you struggling to stay the same place. You are running fast to stay the same place

But there is a ministry with 3.4 percent of the estimates allocated to the Ministry. I cannot be accurate, 3.4..., but certainly that is the Ministry that brings the beef, the biggest money earner. Even more so than agriculture [interruption] oh yes, oh yes, all of the permutation that you will..., but I simply want to say that it has still to be a work of the government to see how much more could be allocated to what we call the productive ministries. You see because I do not want to go there because I have difficulties with any of the Honourable gentlemen on the other side. The Minister of National Mobilisation, I think your Ministry is .8 of a percent; it is not even 1 percent. I was doing the arithmetic the other night you have something about 50 to 60 people to spend less than \$7 million. I mean it is a difficult thing to merge the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs and the International Business and Trade. Minister Slater's Ministry and Minister Saboto Caesar's, Honourable Ministers Ministries for synergies and for effect, we have to examine these things you know even while you are looking for a job for everybody and understanding the ramification of people having won their seats and being representatives and they need to be given ministerial portfolios. But I am simply going back to the fundamental arguments, the Ministries that spend the most earn the least that is the point I want to make you know and the Ministries that are making the money Agriculture, Tourism, Trade are the least outlays.

If you go through Minister Slater, he has been there now for one year, Honourable Minister Slater, of Foreign Affairs and Trade, inheriting, [interruption] I know you are a little worried and it is getting late, inherited from Minister Louis Straker, the Trade Policy is still to be implemented. We are still in 2012 Estimates and I do not have to go and read it to formulate a Trade Policy after ten years in Government and we should have gotten on with that job long, long time ago, because if we are not trading that is not going to improve the balance of payment situation in the country and the ministries that need fortification are not the ministries that are getting monies and so we have found ourselves trying to maintain government business on a very slender means.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to Estimates, I have previously established that there is in deed a very serious credibility gap. I did so up to last year and for emphasis only, I am repeating it this year, Mr. Speaker, for the public listening to us now must remember that sometimes when we listen to these things we have to take them with a pinch of salt and I go back to the Auditor General's Report or the Director of Audit's Report 2004 and this is what they had to say about our capital programmes you know. Over the last six years the actual outturn of capital revenue has shown that finance for capital works was not always forthcoming. This means that adequate funds were not raised to finance and execute a number of projects included in the capital budget for the financial years. That Government should consider reviewing the total Estimates for capital expenditure since these large short falls in capital revenue have implications for the credibility of the capital budget. This is why we refer to it as having a credibility gap in the Estimates. But that is the observation of the Director of Audit to the extent Mr. Speaker, that time permits, let me point out the serious double counting that takes place in these Estimates and how much of the Estimates is incremental or repetitious and I think Honourable Senator Baptiste made that point. It was surprising, Mr. Speaker, it may surprise

you, Mr. Speaker, to find out that there are things in the 2012 Estimates that have been going on since 2008 and are coming back like a recurrent decimal. I was surprised for example, Mr. Speaker, to look at provision for example for the NBC/API building and to find that since 2008 that there was a provision for that. 2012 we are coming back like if it is brand new version information.

The Coast Guard Service, Mr. Speaker, well I do not know whether we are going or coming with that, because in 2008, Mr. Speaker, and 2010 we have provisions and forecast for \$5 million and \$10 million for the budget Estimates for the Coast Guard. In 2010 I think it is, one time we say we were going to get monies from Malaysia to buy fast boats and patrol boats, last year it was the USAID was going to give us, this year the same reference to the Coast Guard. We neither hear about Malaysia nor whether about it was the USAID finance. I may be wrong, but the information is not presented in the same place. We have moved from \$5 million provisions to \$10 million and we are back now I think it is to \$2 million. We are pedalling back as they would say, Mr. Speaker, and if we are not careful we will get lack, this is an old expression we say in athletics. [Interruption] well I will hear you again.

But, Mr. Speaker, I know your response and you said tonight you will be speaking. Wey you call those in the light? Political jumbies that you would [interruption] I know that is why he whisper by them several times that anybody who is listening to us at this time is a junkie. You see the Speaker listen to you more carefully than I. He said they are political junkies. Apologies are in order, you know, jah bless eh. What is the thing they say that 'Scobby' run from again up in the country? [Interruption] the ackatus, political ackatus, I like when you help me.

Mr. Speaker, conscious of time I cannot let the Prime Minister get away and I dealt with when Honourable Senator Francis was speaking, but I am going to repeat it tonight, because, Mr. Prime Minister, you are getting too expensive to mind you [interruption] yes. You are almost sounding like a Government within a Government. I mean in this hard guava crop when we are trying to do more with less, I mean you have all 7s in the island. You have G7, G77, G777, I do not think you have 7777 but all your vehicles have 7. You have all of the sevens for good reasons, but you looking for another vehicle for your residence for \$80,000. What you are going to do with more vehicles? Vehicle upon vehicle, Mr. Speaker, then when all of us in here suffering and them guys ain't strong enough to talk to you, you know. I take off my glasses and

look you in your eyes you know. You want \$500,000 for special development projects; well if I was on the platform I would have put it a little different. I cannot say that is to do hair do and kadooment and all them kinds of thing, much less development project. I am obliged to respect it. But you have \$500,000 you would not even give us \$50,000 so that we could do a little thing in we constituency for we self then you say you house leaking, you want refurbishment of your residence for \$260,000 well that is a house that ain't refurbishment \$260,000 to fix a leak in your house, the roof dropping in? You want \$200,000 for security quarters and only 6 inch block separate you from the main barracks in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Mr. Prime Minister, have a heart. And another \$500,000 for special works and services that you alone could choose. Is you one the people elect? I mean this vex me you know and I know you going curse me stink and you have some things you going to say but a waiting. But *ah* waiting. The language is not quite good, Mr. Speaker.

But I do not know why the Prime Minister wants \$1.5 million, I do not see \$1500 voted for any other parliamentarian to exercise discretion in their constituency, but you have \$1.5 million. I know you are first among equals, but don't tek all. *Ge we ah lickle piece ah de* action too. Tonight if I had that I could have been a little bit more celebratory mood, you know make the people of Central Kingstown more feel appreciated to have me here in representation for them. But Mr. Speaker, the icing on the cake for me on the estimates is the question I asked the last parliament. So I go back to your 2010 budget Honourable Prime Minister, 2010....,

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Ten minutes.

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: More than I need. Much more than I need. On page 58 and 59 of the 2010 budget you heard me with this last year, I went to it for questions last month and tonight is the last you are going to hear about it from me in Parliament. You said, these are substantial monies and you listed 21 projects, \$40.6 million for these 21 specific capital projects programmes which touch and concern urban development and poverty reduction. These sums are in addition to the general impact on the CT of estimates of expenditure which are in excess of \$913 million for the 2010 fiscal year. Well that was a dream because we moved from \$913 and gone back to something near reality. This is the year that we want the customer to take off reaping the bitter harvest and all these kinds of things. But Mr. Speaker, I was amazed, Mr. Speaker, this is serious business, I ...,

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Nah, I did not get that one.

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: You want me read it again? Well let me go over it again nah, because the political junkies

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: No, I am really saying that for the records.

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: Yes, I know you are sincere. I know you are very sincere about it. I am saying in the 2010 estimates, the Honourable Prime Minister indicated that he has 21 projects and..., he said, these are substantial monies \$40.6 million for 21 specific capital projects or programmes which touched and concern urban development and poverty reduction. These sums are in addition to the general impact on the CT of estimates of expenditure which are in excess of \$913 million for the 2010 fiscal year. Well I am saying, reality has set in, they are no longer at \$913 million, we are down now to seven hundred and something million two years after. We have had to cut and come back to reality.

But when I look at this \$40 million that we have been voting for in 2010 and some of them go back even before that in their pre-date 2010, that is why I asked the question last month, Mr. Speaker, and we look at this 2012 estimates, I mean a lot of the things are repetition. The provision here for example in the estimates for \$4 million for the E. T. Joshua Airport in 2012 were there since 2010 that is the point the Honourable Senator Baptiste is making. In other words, how much of this year's budget is incremental or repetitious. In other words, if we take out..., let me be fair to you Honourable Prime Minister, of the \$40 million you wanted to spend in 2010 by now how much you think you spend? You think you spend half or little less than that, because I want to work with you, because if it is half it means this budget can be significant shank and what I am doing here with respect to my presentation you nah, across the board in every single Ministry that we did not shadowed people can pull out data that is repetition from '06, '07, '08, '09, '10 well I am being a little ridiculous, maybe let us go as far back as '08. Now about \$100 million of this budget has been presented recently, we could easily get down the figure far less than this. It is the same thing for the renovation of the Old Montrose Police Station \$500,000 was voted in 2011 that was not spent, it is back here again to fix the police station.

The Kingstown Cleanup Campaign \$1.5 million in 2010 went to \$500,000 in 2011 none of which was spent, so this year when we put a figure there, the increment is really on \$1.7 million. Mr. Speaker, you have a provision here we put a nice little 10 (ten) to the Registry which means that we hope we could find the money. It means that there is funding uncertain, but in 2008 they had voted \$380,000 to do the Registry, in 2012 we cannot find a cent. What it is, it is a joke, it is a dog show? Rehab of the Milton Cato Hospital we have a vote of \$200,000 but this is less than half of the 2011 figure of 510,000; \$2 million for West and Central Kingstown Resource Centres. Well I think somebody referred to this earlier today. This was cut to \$1 million but it now includes Troumaca, well this is really doing more with less except that we may have to be a magician on this case. We originally were going to build two resource centres with \$2 million now we are going to build three with \$1 million. Initially I was going say that this is the only time Central Kingstown was mentioned by name, but then I saw that you had mentioned to the Old Montrose Police Station.

Kingstown Port development well that is work in progress \$1.3 million and it is still down from the \$3 million that we had originally. Honourable Minister Miguel, Minister of Education, I asked you in this House by way of question on the proposal for the Grammar School and the High School repairs, my Alma Mater Grammar School, 1964 I went to that school, I am in my wisdom years now, 64 and 6 is 70 and 30 is 2000 that is 36 and 11 47? Years ago the school builds; you see how old I am?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: You do not have to give out your age.

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: Yes I have to give out my age. I am in my wisdom years. You said that monies were there, they going to be doing drawings and designs etc. you know what is in the vote now for the school, zero, no intention to do any repairs for the Grammar School. Children are leaving better equipped, furnished facilities and pass the Common Entrance and stepping down when it comes to the Grammar School. The roof is falling in, the bathrooms in deplorable conditions and it is time the Grammar School and the High School get their just desserts, not deserve, their just desserts. Why are they being punished? In 2008, Mr. Speaker, we voted \$850,000 for Forth Charlotte I think Honourable Member for South Leeward made reference to this for the Forth Charlotte bridge and the Verbeke bridge. Well the Verbeke has been completed and I think they did a fairly good job, I like the river defences and so on and so forth, I am kind of impressed by the work there, but

why are not attending to the Forth Charlotte Bridge with a little greater urgency because it contributes to our tourism sites and so forth.

E. T. Joshua Airport Rehab, Rehab of the Murray's Village Road down from \$2 million to \$1.2 million, Kingstown Bus Terminal Development, Minister Francis spoke about this. We seems to be going round in circles but you have an interesting observation here this evening you know, you said you are going to fix up and pretty up Kingstown, my language, [interruption] well I do not want you to engage me, because you might want me married after that. You said you were going to fix up Kingstown and you have [laughter] I could testify to that..., if is one thing I could vouch for you, I could vouch for you. I vouch for you, I vouch for you, and you said the business houses in the city were going to partner with you to you help you fix up the city. Now that is a good public-private sector partnership and it happens that I look forward to it. But please remember there is a constitution and I am also the representative for Central Kingstown as Mr. Eustace is for East and Honourable Daniel Cummings for West. Give us a little consultation. There are too many things that are happening in people's constituencies in which the duly elected representatives are not given the benefit of a consultation. We are not Government, we are not Government and we ought not to be begging but the wishes of the people must be respected when we have these important developments, because we are the representatives of. The upgrading of the admin centre Mr. Speaker...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: Greetings.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: It is time for greetings now.

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: Yes. The upgrading of the admin centre \$1.8 million is down to \$2.5 million. All I am showing, Mr. Speaker, we have been shrinking, shrinking the budget. [Interruption] no, I am into greetings time, Mr. Speaker.

I want to touch a little on the Argyle Airport which I am in support of, but the fact that it is coming from a previous position where had said that it should be..., we have transferred it to the IADB, it has now creep back onto the books and is now release being central government

funding and in fact, [interruption] oh I did not hear that you never said that [interruption] from you.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Let us the greetings now.

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you for the time. I want to extend greetings to you Honourable Speaker, to the Members on the other side of the House, [interruption] you would like to see me more than others Minister. Sometimes when the recording artists, when I look back I see the bald spot on my head is getting more pronounced that says something.

I have the temporary privilege to represent the most beautiful people in St. Vincent and the Grenadines those in Central Kingstown, always I might be able to call them by villages, and they know who they are. It was a testing year, one thing to be a candidate and one thing to be an opposition member; it is a horse of a different colour to be a representative of a constituency. All my colleagues know what I am talking about on the other side. Your life is no longer your own and I know many of you are not going to remember by the last good but just the one you that you could do you know of what it is worth I wish you all a very Merry Christmas, I regret very much that your constituency Central Kingstown is the only one, only constituency that does not have a medical centre or clinic of its own and I would have liked to see in that new budget, but it is a little too late. We probably will have to wait until we get into government; you have to hang on there a little bit more. [Interruption] [Laughter] when it is even later.

But, Mr. Speaker, it is a time when you have to be careful with your monies in your pocket. Choose carefully, choose wisely, do not over do, pay attention to your personal security always, inside and outside of the home, even through the city, there is always people who will like to dispossessed you, around the place who have not worked enough, give the much support as much as possible you can to the forces of law and order in this country, they deserve our support, they have a very hard job and their work is cut out for them and come back refreshed and reinvigorated in 2012 to continue this deserving journey. You have walked the first mile with me, we will do the other four and then as the Honourable Prime Minister looks me in the face, we will decide how many more miles he will do. I am much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Any further debate? No further debate, Honourable Prime Minister.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, it does not matter me, you would listen to me on the radio anyhow [laughter]. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank all Honourable Members for their contributions and there are several issues which are here Mr. Speaker which would be brought into sharper relief at the time of the budget. I want to say Mr. Speaker, and it is unfortunate that all the Members of the Opposition have left. It is a habit of theirs; they do not like to hear me wind up whether the Estimates or the Budget Debate, we have become accustomed to that.

Mr. Speaker, there is a profound contradiction between the position of the Leader of the Opposition which itself is internally inconsistent and several members of his team. The Leader of the Opposition says that the Government is spending too much money and we should have a greater restraint. Indeed, he speaks with much approval for the conclusion of some of the IMF Directors that the Government should engage itself on a more robust programme of fiscal consolidation. A more robust programme of fiscal consolidation means among other things getting rid of public servants and teachers and police officers. Firing a lot of persons who work for wages, increase taxes that is what the IMF calls for in terms of a more robust fiscal consolidation and whilst he says that on the one hand, he is saying to us that we are not spending enough to generate economic growth. Because he has no sense of balance when he speaks on these matters and speaks in rather opportunistic terms it leads to confusion particularly by those members on his side who do not grasp one aspect of what he is talking about, restraint and who are calling for a long list of things which you must do additionally, their pet projects in their constituencies to spend on.

Of course, the Member for Central Kingstown takes a position that he has no problem at all with the recurrent budget because he does not think that you should require anybody, he does not think you should lay off anybody like what is happening in Greece, but he has a problem on the capital side. What is his problem on the capital side, we are not spending enough on the capital side, but ask him where is the money to come from, he says float a bond. Well a bond is not a magic bullet, a bond is an instrument to raise money which you have to pay back and you cannot just float a bond. You have to float a bond as we have done and we will do again, targeted to specific development projects and structured in a manner which shows both

prudence and enterprise. So the first problem they have is that of internal confusion and inconsistencies.

How can they say that this budget will not create any jobs when on the recurrent side some jobs are created, but let us move away from that and go to the capital side. When we have 39.6 percent of the capital budget, call it 40 percent or \$73.2 million are in the functional classification of economic affairs intended to stimulate growth and we have a range of capital projects. Matters relating to physical infrastructure, roads, bridges, airports \$7.7 million for tourism and private sector development and they look only at one side of the tourism equation and do not look at several things including the physical facilities for the upgrade of the tourism product. We have support for primary agriculture \$1 million, we have Kingstown cleanup \$3.7 million, they have not said one single word about energy at all which is an issue we have to address we have \$2.4 million for energy conservation. We just had energy week and the 50th anniversary of VINLEC celebrations. We have detailed many steps which are taking in the area of energy conservation and alternative energy uses. Not one single word from them.

Port development, we have to have the development of the seaports, we have to have the development of the airports. What is that; is not that private sector driven activity? If you do not have the international airport to bring the people in, what are you going to have? Let us look practically at what we have here in this country. 50,000 persons are in the economically active age group. The rest of the population is too old to work, too young to work, at school, or too ill to work. There are 50,000 persons. The 50,000 persons need to sell their goods and services to people. You have to have proper airports and seaports to bring the people in to sell your goods and services or to send your goods and services out. It is an elementary point.

Mr. Speaker, if I may say just in parenthesis that when we are finished with the Argyle International Airport and we develop the new city at E. T. Joshua and we have a proper road access coming down to where the cruise ship pier is, we have already done the preliminary studies and the preliminary number for US\$98 million to move the port of Kingstown in stages to the lower part of the city near to what is called, “the bottom town area”, to assist in the development of that area also. Now all these are strategic options which you have to be putting in mind for the further development of this country rather than that, time is taken up as to whether you train five people or three people to go for Home Help for the elderly, which programme they never supported and which we introduced.

This is why I say the Opposition they are not serious people. Now so we have 40 percent of the capital programme seventy odd million dollars directed with economic activity, economic affairs, you want it any plainer than that? We are not going to create jobs? I want them to remember in the inter-central period 1991 to 2001 the last ten years of the NDP Administration.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, the migration from the country, the net migration was in excess of the natural increase in the population. Over 18,000 persons migrated that is why the population fell between 1991 and 2001, because the net migration exceeded the natural increase in the population, but even when that took place you had an increase in unemployment of nearly 2 percent, the census data show that. Look at the 1991 census data and look at the 2001 census data, those are not my numbers. Anybody, the press can look at them and inquire and by the way, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, there is this talk now because of some refugees who was not to apply for refugee status in Canada bad mouthed migration, that things bad that is why people are migrating. Well why is it that more people migrated in the last ten years of the NDP than the natural increase in the population? I am not saying it is because things were bad.

There is an inherent tendency in our population towards migration and from 1960 onwards you are moving from sixty odd percent of the natural increase migrated until you reach the period 1991 to 2001 where more persons migrated than the natural increase in the population and I am saying that that is not a bad thing and I believe that that trend has continued. But what we must do is to train that population well so that when they migrate they enter at a higher level in the chain of the international division of labour so that they can send home more remittances so rather than having about 6 percent of GDP approximately in remittance \$120 million a year you can maybe have 10 percent of GDP amounting to in excess of \$200 million a year and with those monies you use people..., you use those monies or monies which comes from that circulating in the country to train more people, build more schools etc. etc.

Symbolic of what we do is that we send nurses to Barbados and not cane cutters. That is clear symbolic direction and then of course these estimates say further not only must we train the people, and the estimates indicating how we are lifting the quality of teaching and the framework which we have put for that and the assessment of quality teaching we are also addressing the issue of the improvement of the health of the people so that while we train you we take more advantage of you for the training what is in your head that your body will also be healthy and strong that you can work better on an on-going basis and that you can work longer

to increase productivity. That will increase productivity, not a productivity centre. A productivity centre there is nothing wrong about it, but what you have to do is training an organisation and health and leadership and management, those are the issues and to provide the services of the state better quality more cheaply, more efficiently which is what we are seeking to do and the budget has a series of indicators and a series of numbers to support all that.

Mr. Speaker, it is utter rot to say that the performance of the capital budget is to be hugely questioned. Everybody acknowledges who studied this that the extent of capital..., the spending of monies on the capital side has increased markedly over the years when the NDP was in office. The last year when the Leader of the Opposition was Minister of Finance is \$35 million was spent you know, \$35 million on the capital side and Mr. Speaker, what they are talking about, in last December he is wishing people Merry Christmas and I have nothing with that but in December 2000 which was the last December they were here, he budgeted, he provided \$300,000 for Christmas work, but they only spend \$200,000. We are now providing \$3 million and we have 4500 people on the road [applause]. That is what..., and at the same time there is \$5 million for road work for the patching of the roads and immediately before that \$2 million for cleaning, especially for those who wanting to put something in the kitty to buy uniforms and so on for the children going back to school. Between September and now \$10 million on those three items alone on the road, I am not talking about big capital projects like the Colonaire Bridge and other major roads and so on and so forth. I am not talking about those.

There is no country in the OECS that you see that and Mr. Speaker, and we are doing all these things. I do not have to look for commendations or praise from the IMF. As I made it plain that there are three bits of statements that you get from the IMF. First of all, they would make suggestions about things which we are doing so they are preaching to the converted, in other words, they take our ideas and suggest them that is one set. Second set of ideas they may suggest, we say, yes that sounds okay, we may amend them, we adopt them and we call them our own and there is the third set of ideas which we say that they are not acceptable to us. But what is the position of the Leader of the Opposition? Oh if you do not accept them you know is trouble down the road for you. I mean, we are not on an IMF programme, we have not miss-paid anybody their salary, any civil servants, you notice today they said, Mr. Speaker, not one single thing about the debt, because the debt in 20..., the public debt in 2011 September 30th is about 1 percent less than in 2010 and in 2012 the interest payment which we would be making

is 3.4 percent less than the interest payments which we make this year and which this year was also less in terms of the interest payments that we made last year doing more with less and not borrowing over the last three years one single cent on commercial terms. We have borrowed on concessionary terms and in some cases very concessionary terms.

The Leader of the Opposition makes a trite statement that we are not in control alone of our monetary policy. He spoke for ten minutes on that, economics 101, I do not know why grown men and women have to be subjected to that sort of a thing and the Honourable Member of Central Kingstown said that it was a profound statement like a school master teaching errant school boys. I do not know this kind of trite, commonplace, economics 101; one eye man in blind man country apparently is king, but not this country over there.

Mr. Speaker, we have another instrument other than the fiscal instrument. That instrument is call “sovereignty and independence” and we have used our instrument of sovereignty and independence, and we have used our foreign policy to implement this year a one laptop per child programme for the primary schools and also in the first form in the secondary school. The laptops cost over \$16 million, \$17 million Eastern Caribbean plus of course we use the people themselves from the Ministry headed by Mrs. Ramsamooj, we did not hire any expert. If that programme was implemented by the World Bank it would have been in the Estimates to over \$20 million, but we did it quote unquote off budget with not one cent coming from the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines save and except to divert staff from elsewhere in the Ministry to manage the programme. It is a remarkable story. The same way in which we did the Cuban Eye Care Programme with over 2000 people going to Cuba and so on and so forth. But you notice the traditional thinking, he can only manipulate the fiscal side, but he does not see the instrument of sovereignty and independence as important instruments for the mobilisation of resources to aid the development of this country. Therefore, the management becomes not only simply a narrow economic matter; it is a matter of political economy.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let us lay to rest about the comparative performance of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the OECS countries. First of all, let me say that in the year 2011 St. Vincent and the Grenadines according to the statisticians in the Ministry of Finance supported by the Central Bank we will have economic growth of 0.8 percent in 2012, not minus 0.4 as the IMF has estimated. Now the point is this minus 0.4 even is plus 0.8 is still relatively flat, but we are coming out of a situation of a world economic crisis which they want to downplay. They want

to downplay the fact that is over \$370 million in liabilities from CLICO/British American for St. Vincent and the Grenadines and \$250 million as estimated by the economic commissions for Latin America in respect of Tomas and the April floods, \$250 million Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, is 12½ of the GDP of this country and \$370 million you check it out and you will see it is a number approaching 20 percent..., in the region of 20 percent of the GDP. So both of them together you talk about over 30 percent of the GDP. I repeat all the time and they do not seem to get it.

When Presidents Bush and Obama put TARP funds together (Troubled Assets Recovery Programme funds) of \$900 billion in the United States to deal with their economic crisis that is less than 1 percent of America's GDP. What has hit us, not the problems from outside yet you know, just the region and the disasters is about 30 percent of the GDP. If I had a 1 percent problem of GDP I would not have any problem at all. So that we have to do more with less and the evidence is that we are doing it.

Mr. Speaker, I want to answer a kind of a real awful low kind of proposition about expenditure at the office of the Prime Minister. Purchase of a vehicle \$80,000, Mr. Speaker, I have been advised by the persons, I do not drive any of the vehicles and the one which is relating to the house for the Prime Minister's resident, because there has to be vehicle there, which a policeman drives, the vehicle breaks down all about. Vehicles do get old, so they have to buy a new one; it is as simple as that. Special development projects of \$500,000 and special works and services projects of \$500,000. Mr. Speaker, these special works and services projects and special development projects were there when Sir James was Minister of Finance, they were there when the Leader of the Opposition was Minister of Finance and they are there with this Minister of Finance. There are some small projects and not just for these constituencies represented by Parliamentarians on this side but on the other side. Small projects which are not listed in the Estimates and things which come up from time to time and the interesting thing is that persons will come from the Opposition and say there is a little something to be done here. I will say, well check the Cabinet Secretary, I am saying representatives here, but persons will come and say well there is this little thing to be done. I get the Cabinet Secretary; I do not control the funds. Cabinet Secretary is the accounting officer, she gets the Public Works or BRAGSA and they do it. These are small projects littered across the country.

Now I know what the Honourable Member of Central Kingstown wants. He wants that allocation to him and to other Members individually in the Parliament, but there has to be control mechanisms in the Government for the spending of public monies. You notice that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition does not address that, he is silent on that. Now that raised it he may address it and he may wish to go along with the Member for Central Kingstown, but the fact of the matter is that if he were to take the position of the Member for Central Kingstown he would be a recent convert to that position, because when he was Minister of Finance and when his predecessor was Minister of Finance they had these particular monies.

Improvement of the security quarters the Prime Minister's Residence that is not for me. One of the reasons I did not move into the residence of the Prime Minister is that they did not have any security quarters, but the security quarters which were built, they are inadequate. I have built police stations all over this country, the people call hotels. Police officers are not boy scouts. They must have proper accommodation and frankly speaking I feel very bad that there have not been improvements there already. To say that they must go up by Montrose to sleep is a Randolph Toussaint point that is what he had advocated. Now if the Opposition wants to follow Randolph Toussaint on this matter that is fine, they can do so, but I am not following him, I want to make sure that the police officers are well taken care of.

Improvements, refurbishments of the Prime Minister's Residence , Mr. Speaker, \$160,000; Mr. Speaker, I moved in to that house in 2004 on March 28th everybody in this country remembers it, wash yo foot and come party when we opened it and moved in, that is an old building on which they had been rebuilding and there was some serious design flaws. There are parts of the residence, they are leaking. I do not have to go into the details, it will shame the country to know there are certain things inside of the residence..., you know, look I do not have to live there you know, I have a house, I do not have no problem with that.

In fact, before they had built the library which I insisted on and the quarters for the officers I did not move in for three years. The public servants thought I was joking. I was not going unless somewhere was built for my books and where I can sit and study properly because it was configured as though it was almost like a bachelor's facility. And then, Mr. Speaker, every place in the Caribbean where a house is not provided for the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister lives in his own house, they pay him rent, it happens in Barbados, it happens in St. Kitts, I lived in my own house at Frenches for three years and when it was raised with me by

officials, I say, no, no, no, no, please, please, I do not want to get any money for living in my own house. I rejected that.

Similarly, there is a vehicle which is to be there at the residence because after all it is the Prime Minister. They had an old broken down vehicle, I had a pretty new vehicle 354 Mitsubishi SUV, we ran it for several months I think about a year before there was a replacement vehicle for it and when they came to me and said, well because it is not doing your work it is Government work I must send it to GESCO to put gasoline, I say, you crazy, put gasoline in my vehicle, I say, no, no, no, I pay for it. But none of that would be remembered you know.

But one of the problems is this, when people have minds which are not sufficiently elevated on these issues they think to repair a property which is worth a lot of money, no do not repair it, and wait until you have to move so you would have to do not a renovation but a complete rebuilding. I did not know that in the year 2011 I had to come here to defend some money to buy a vehicle for the residence of the Prime Minister to repair the house or to provide better accommodation for the security officers who put their lives on the line in respect of the protection of the Prime Minister and as I say, I apologise to them publicly for having not improved the facility which is there. It is too small, too crowded for them. When you say..., look when I went there, when I saw the property first it did not even have a bathroom facility for security officers, to the SSU who are on guard nor the persons who are attached to the Prime Minister.

I built such a facility up by Frenches at my residence out of my own money to accommodate them. I am really sorry that the Prime Minister of a proud and independent country has to be dragged into this mire when the Member for Central Kingstown says I am becoming too expensive to mind.

The salary of the Prime Minister is less than the salary of the Chief Executive Officer of VINLEC, of IADC, of BRAGSA, of the Tourism Authority, of the Chief Engineer, but you think I big grudge them? All these persons are on contract. I do not big grudge them. In fact, I am glad for their salaries because they are good people and in order to get very good people in those positions you have to pay. I know what my salary was when I asked you the people to give me this job and they have given it to me. The fact that I could make more money being a

lawyer in private practice I cannot raise that point or that I am making a sacrifice, nobody asked me to do it, on my own volition I asked you to give me the job and I bear the consequences, but I do not go about bemoaning it or say that I am working for this or that, no, no, no, no, no, I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, but I have to defend this elemental matter in the year of our Lord 2011. That is where they want to drag us, that is where they want to drag us on a discussion on the Estimates? Where nothing serious is spoken about by them, that is where they reach? No.

Mr. Speaker, I will answer the falsehood uttered about the Coast Guard Service. The Coast Guard we were going to have some vessels a firm in Malaysia and it was going to be a self-financing arrangement and I pointed out that we have to put the sum, the large sum in the budget because it had to be recorded there at once, but you were only going to pay a million dollars a year US, having paid a million dollars down because it was a kind a hire purchase arrangement, but you just do not enter every year the million. You had to enter the asset at one time. The firm had some problems as a consequence of the meltdown internationally. They could not offer the financing. I told the country..., well it is a blessing in disguise because just about that time President Obama announced the security initiative for the Caribbean Basin and we are getting among other things two good Coast Guard Cutters plus the Coast Guard base in Canouan and with prospect of getting a third Cutter. It is just that on the US side there were delays, administrative delays. It has nothing to do with us. So if I expected to get it in 2011 and it did not come in 2011 not because of our fault are you going to crucify me and use that as something that it was there last year and it is there this year, and I have explained that publicly.

Then they just read things incorrectly, the rehab of the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital we had \$500,000 in it for this year, but we put \$200,000 for next year. The reason why is that we had intended to start doing some repairs on the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital before the 10th EDF kicked in and if you look in the Estimates for this year you have \$8.6 million for the modernization of the health sector from the 10th EDF which is thirty something million dollars over the three years and part of that programme involves work to be done at the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital in relation to the Theatres, in relation to the area for the cooking, the Minister of Health knows all the various areas better than I do and he will no doubt speak about them in the budget.

The same thing with the Grammar School and the Girls' High School, Mr. Speaker, what the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown did not read was the note, the comment which says,

this project is under review. What happened is this, the project had a limited scope, but now it has to have a larger scope and that is why it has been put under review and in reviewing it, we are hoping to address the matter not in this year coming, in terms of the larger project, but in a subsequent year hopefully 2013.

In the meantime, we will do things from monies relating to the upkeep on the current side, the upkeep of schools, so monies would be spent on the Grammar School and the High School but not from that account but from the other account which deals with the general upkeep of schools. Not the \$1.5 million for secondary school expansion which is a different programme for specific schools which are mentioned there and also there are resources out of the \$16.5 million earmarked for BRAGSA where some of that could be used to do some minor repairs.

Mr. Speaker, these are..., if they read the Estimates properly they would know and then of course, it says that the Argyle International Airport has now come into the Central Government when we said it was going to be IADC. But in the last budget in this current budget of the current year 2011 you looked into it you have over \$20 million which we have paid to IADC during this year. The last payment which we have made to IADC is fourteen point something million dollars from the Central Government through the loan which we got from the ALBA Bank 25 years at 2 percent interest and this year we make a provision and I am hopeful out of the \$15 million here when we get about the \$18 million for the other 20 percent shares in the National Commercial Bank we will take some of that money to international airport. We are getting a tremendous amount of help from people externally, but we have to do some things ourselves too as we have been doing, to the sale of lands for example.

Mr. Speaker, today during the lunchtime and one of the reasons I was late in coming back to Parliament, not the only reason, but the head of the Aide Division of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Azerbaijan was here and among the things which we discussed was education and possible assistance in the area of airports, assistance for the airport, building on work which Ambassador Gonsalves at the United Nations had done. He had paid a visit to Azerbaijan and it was agreed today that when I am leaving London to go to the Republic of Georgia I have to past through the Capital city of Azerbaijan call Baku and spend... the envoy is very happy to have me spend a day to meet the Prime Minister and possibly the President of Azerbaijan on my way to the Republic of Georgia. You see what I spoke about earlier about using the instrument of independence and sovereignty.

Mr. Speaker, how can anybody really want to talk about prudence on this budget? On the recurrent side we are slightly less than 2011, just under \$1 million less, I will say that that is good going taking into account the times and how we have reconsidered internally the budget numbers in education, in health, different posts and so on, how we are doing with things like single regulatory authority, setting up the embassy in Venezuela which is linked to trade and investment and Mr. Speaker, when you look at the capital side and you see the amount of monies we have in grants and soft loans, we know that a significant portion of \$184 million put for the capital budget would be achieved this year God willing... ..

I want to say something, I heard the Member for North Leeward, I listened to him while he was speaking though I was not here, he said that if the Ministry of Agriculture had not been negligent earlier this year we did not have to spend \$3.44 million on Black Sigatoka. I mean I do not know why persons speak about things that they do not know. The Black Sigatoka is far more resilient than leaf spot, the yellow Sigatoka and you are not going to get rid of it, you have to control it and you have to control it with a minimum number of cycles per year.

The reason why later this year there had to be a rapid doubling up quickly is because of the error in the earlier period, but whether or not they had been negligent, we did not bring the Black Sigatoka here you know, the Government did not bring it, but it is a reality you have to address it and you had to address it whether or not the Ministry officials had been negligent or not because you have a minimum number of cycles. Look in Latin America is far more than six cycles they do you know on an on-going basis 12, 14, some places even do more, but the experts say that here we can adequately address it with six cycles. But of course if we have to do eight cycles we have to find the money to do the other two cycles. So when I hear that sort of a talk I know that...

Look Mr. Speaker, there has to be a seriousness about this and people when they come they must be informed and just do not talk things and that is why the public do not take seriously their utterances and they say on education they are not going to form an opinion until they hear the Minister of Education. On health they are not going to make any statement, they are not going..., the public say they are not bothering about what they are talking about until they hear the Minister of Health. The same thing with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Transport the area of Social Development and Housing every area and on the large national questions, people say, listen, I am fed up with the propaganda and the untruths, I am just waiting until the Prime

Minister talks on these things because it is not over a decade they have been coming with misinformation for the people.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say this, today 13th when I got into my office today I made a joke with my staff, I say, what is my name? They said, we do not understand Prime Minister, I say but today I should not be here according to the Leader of the Opposition. I would have been out at least of yesterday. He would have been the one here and the staff laughs because we remember on the Tuesday night after the Monday election he gave me six months, by Thursday night at a rally at which our General Secretary, the Honourable Minister of Transport and Works counted 53 listeners plus 51 persons who were selling in trays, vendors and that is where the pronouncement was made and when people asked me, I say, well what do you expect, Mr. Speaker, what they had was a wake. When somebody is essentially dead and in this case an organisation and a leader who is subject to the third consecutive defeat it is a wake and nobody take seriously what anybody said at a wake, because a lot of people when they are at wakes they speak the greatest things about the dead, but it was a peculiar wake, it was a wake without cocoa tea. So I mean, what do you expect? We have here and we are here addressing the serious problems for the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. A budget for jobs, a budget on which nearly 40 percent going to the economic affairs, we are balancing with health, without in anyway downplaying education, tourism, agriculture, social welfare and I hear they talk, Mr. Speaker, about the Social Welfare budget as though it is only under the Ministry of Social Development [interruption] oh, that is where the biggest trunk is.

But at the office of the Prime Minister under the recurrent budget there is a sum of \$253,300 for Social Welfare. Then under the Minister of Transport there is \$510,000 for transport subsidy, subsidizing school children that are in addition to those who are the 2000 children who are on public assistance. Then at the Ministry of Health there is a specific sum of \$200,000 for Social Welfare where they contribute to people going overseas. The number it was increased to under the NDP, it moved from \$10,000 to \$30,000 you know. It is \$200,000 there and \$300,000 up by me, how they think that people get overseas when they are seeking medical attention, they want a little passage to be paid and those are monies they want to cut out from the office of the Prime Minister. When I get calls from sorts of persons [interruption] yes, I know they send persons too but I do not deal with those monies, I only put them there, the Cabinet Secretary and her staff they handle those things, because as St. Paul's says, and I repeat, you have to love the Jews and the Gentiles and everybody. It is do not matter what is your political colouration

you are from St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Help coming and that is why we get the blessings.

Mr. Speaker, this budget is a budget fit for the time. I beg to move Mr. Speaker, that **BE IT RESOLVED** that this Honourable House of Assembly, do adopt the Estimates for the financial year ending the 31st December 2012 and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Honourable House note the projections for the financial years ending the 31st December 2013 and 31st December 2014, I so moved.

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to second the motion.

Question put and agreed to.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, may I crave your indulgence, there is one other resolution, given the fact that the Appropriation Bill begins, the reading takes place on the 9th January, the resolution regarding the borrowing from the 1st January 2012 to 31st December 2012, I would like if we can pass that motion here so that at least for the first half of January out of an abundance of caution I have things in order. That is why I am paid to do to what I am doing, Mr. Speaker.

Accordingly, I beg to move:

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable House do authorise the Minister of Finance to borrow by means of fluctuating overdraft or otherwise from First Caribbean International Bank or the RBTT Caribbean Ltd. or the Bank of Nova Scotia, or the Bank of St. Vincent and the Grenadines Ltd., money to an amount not exceeding in the aggregate thirty-five million dollars, during the period 1st January, 2012 to 31st December, 2012 for the purpose of meeting the current requirements of the Government.

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to second the motion.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, before you put the thing may I just give one explanation so that Honourable Members would notice \$35 million and it was the largest sum on the last occasion \$75 million the reason, Mr. Speaker, is that we have converted a portion of the overdraft as a loan and that is reflected in the section on the public debt that we have done so where we are getting a lower rate of interest and we will have to pay for overdraft, another way in which we save interest cost. So if Honourable Members see \$35 million and wondering what is happening, I provide that explanation and for members of the public.

Mr. Speaker, I am sorry, you were going to read the...

Question put and agreed to.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move that this Honourable House do stand suspended to the 9th January, 2012 for us to have the 1st reading of the Appropriation Bill. Mr. Speaker, the rules indicate Standing Orders that as soon..., immediately after the 1st reading of the Appropriation Bill takes place I must proceed to do the second reading and do my budget speech so that I cannot do that now, so I would not move the 1st reading. I will wait until January 9th, 2012.

Accordingly I beg to move that this Honourable House do stand suspended until January 9th at 4:00 p.m. I think that is the usual date.

Question put and agreed to.

**House suspended at 10:20 p.m.
Until January 9th 2012, at 4:00 p.m.**