

No. 2

Thursday

First Session

20th January, 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 SECOND 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.**

SECOND SITTING

20th January 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
THURSDAY 20TH JANUARY 2011

PRAYERS

HONOURABLE HENDRICK ALEXANDER: The Honourable Speaker read the prayers of the House.

OBITUARIES

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, today is going to be a long day so I would like the matters of the obituaries, hopefully, to be short. So I would like simply to acknowledge and accordingly pay tribute to the following persons who have gone to the great beyond. There are other members of this side, Mr. Speaker, who would perhaps say a few words about one or two other persons, but I want to recognise the contributions of Clifton Gumbs, popularly known as “Bang”, Ethel Hamilton and regionally, former Chief Minister John Osborne and former Professor of Law, Ralph Carnegie.

Mr. Speaker, we can say volumes about each of these four individuals. I will just simply like for this Honourable House to acknowledge their contributions and for us to express condolences to their loved ones and hope that their respective souls rest in peace.

Mr. Speaker, in the case of Ethel Hamilton, I announced today that the National Lottery annually would award a scholarship to the secondary schools, the post secondary institutions, one is either one of these sets of institutions to be known as the Ethel Hamilton Scholarship. I am obliged.

HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL: Mr. Speaker, let me on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Transformation, Forestry and Fisheries express my deepest sympathy to outstanding icons that would have passed through the Ministry of Agriculture since I became a worker with the Ministry and that is none other than Emmanuel “Manny” Francis and Vibert Williams.

Mr. Speaker, Vibert Williams would have worked with the Banana Growers Association for quite a many of years and rose to the position of Acting General Manager. He left St. Vincent in the early 1990s, but passed away quite recently in the United States of America.

Equally, Mr. Speaker, Emmanuel Francis with whom I have worked with for many, many years, he would have been an icon in the Ministry of Agriculture. He has left a legacy for many of us within the Agriculture Sector. I just want to ask, Mr. Speaker, that may their souls rest in peace. I am much obliged.

HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise on behalf of the Ministry of Culture to pay tribute to the life of a veteran mass man and teacher, Edison “Sheggy” John for his overall contribution to the art form. He was a leader, Mr. Speaker, of the band “Bad Lads and Lasses” and that band would have made tremendous contribution to the carnival. May his soul rest in peace, I am obliged.

HONOURABLE ARNHEM EUSTACE: Mr. Speaker, I rise also to offer condolences to the families of a number of persons who have been mentioned. I wish to add to that list Mrs. Jean Wickham of Barrouallie whose contribution is also very well known. I was unaware unfortunately that Former Chief Minister John Osborne had passed on and I, in fact, knew him quite well and had attended a number of meetings with him over the years. I am very saddened to hear of his passing.

I wish also to recognise the passing of Ms. Hamilton and Manny Francis with whom I have worked for many years in the Ministry of Agriculture and I am quite aware of the contribution he himself has made to the Agricultural development in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Mr. Speaker, every time we come to this House we find ourselves having to offer tributes and condolences. I simply wish to say, may God have mercy on all their souls. I am much obliged.

CONGRATULATORY REMARKS

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay, there is none it seems.

CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: The Minutes of the Sittings held on 25th October, 9th November, and 29th December 2010, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and confirmed with amendments.

CORRECTIONS

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: In the Minutes of the Meeting of 25th October, Mr. Speaker on page 15 towards the bottom of the page – Honourable Daniel Cummings, second line, unable to rise to speak to seek your address, that should be redress.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Just run that for me again, where you say it is?

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Page 15 towards the bottom beginning Honourable Daniel Cummings, middle line imputed to me and I am unable to rise to seek your address, change address to redress.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay, all right, thank you.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Mr. Speaker, the Minutes for 29th December, 2010 on page 2, election of Speaker. The Minutes reflect that a ballot was held and the results were 13 votes to 9 votes in favour of yourself, Mr. Hendrick Alexander. Mr. Speaker, the record reflects that there were 13 members who voted on the Government side. The number of persons who are entitled to vote on the Government side was 12 because the Honourable Attorney General is not entitled to vote as a public officer.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Who said that?

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Who said that she is not entitled?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Yes.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: The Constitution said that.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Where in the section of the Constitution you are using? Just a minute, just a minute, just a minute.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Section 41 of the Constitution Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Could you kindly read it for me?

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: If you wish I can explain, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: No, just read it and let me know. Tell me exactly the section you are referring to.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Section 41 of the Constitution deals with voting in the House.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Voting.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Yes. And it provides that except for certain specified instances that matters before the House that is section 41(1) are to be determined by a vote of a majority of the Members of the House. But if you go down you will see on section 41(3) excludes the Attorney General as a Member of the House for purposes of voting and that...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Section 24(3), yes.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Section 41(3).

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Yes.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: It says, "References to Members of the House in section 34 of this Constitution and subsection 1 of this section which is the section I just pointed you to, section 43(1)

which deals with voting.” So it says, “for the purposes of subsection 1 which is the section that deals with voting in the House generally, member does not include and I am paraphrasing, it says this Constitution shall not include the Attorney General if he is a Member by virtue of section 23(4) of the Constitution. The Attorney General....”

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: 24(3)?

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: 24(3).

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Right.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: 24(3) provides for the appointment of a public officer as the Attorney General and deems that officer to be a Member of the House. But section 43(3) of the Constitution says, “For purposes of voting in the House the Attorney General who is a public officer is not a Member.”

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: If she is a Member by virtue of section 43(3), okay, yes. Yes, I think..., Honourable Prime Minister.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, the first point I would like to make is that there cannot be a correction of the Minutes. That actually took place. That is the first point. The Minutes are accurate record of a Meeting.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Yes, that is correct.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: If any Honourable Member has a legal query in relation to some matter which is before the House on which the House made a determination, there are other fora and other circumstances for those to be addressed. With great respect, Mr. Speaker, to my legal colleague, I have been advised on a proper interpretation of the statute, sorry, of the Constitution read in conjunction with the Standing Orders that it was in order for the Honourable Attorney General to vote on this matter. But Mr. Speaker, you are not a Judge. I think that there are different ways in which this issue could be addressed, if an Honourable Member feels that he has a view on this matter and at the end of the day the Speaker has been duly elected. There is no question about the Speaker’s election. Matter on which there is absolute clarity in the Constitution is that the Honourable Attorney General cannot vote in respect of the removal of the Speaker. But Mr. Speaker, all that I have said beyond making the first point that I have made is really by way of a supplementary explanation. The fundamental question which faces us on an item on the agenda that is to say, the adoption of the minutes, the minutes accurately reflected what took place. I do not have to advise my Honourable friend, he can bring a substantive motion to debate the issue, he can go to the court for a declaration, and he can ask the Speaker for an independent legal opinion by a constitutional lawyer, there are many other avenues and recourse. Certainly, this on the question of the confirmation of the minutes it is wholly improper for him to raise the question. I am obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Honourable Member. Let me make a decision on this matter please.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: I had the floor; I think the Honourable Prime Minister was asking me to give way to either seek clarification or something. I had not finished the points I was making in regards to this matter.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Well, you could have said that.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Let me just say this.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Both of you are standing.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: May I just say this, because there are so many things which are spoken incorrectly, sometimes wittingly, sometimes unwittingly, I did not rise to ask my Honourable friend to give way. Mr. Speaker, I was attempting to rise, you told me to sit and then you asked me to speak. Let the record reflect what happened and not having angels dance on the head of a pin, because it is being suggested that I asked him to give way. I did not do that. Surely when you asked me to speak, Mr. Speaker, is that you were satisfied that he had finished with his presentation.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Maybe if I would be given the opportunity to deal with matters we probably would sort out all of these. The issue is I thought that the Member would have finished his presentation and he was of course at liberty to say, Mr. Speaker, I am not finished, he say it now, you are not finished. So you are continuing with the matter? Okay, fine. Let me hear you.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To get back to the issue at hand, we are dealing with a very serious matter, Mr. Speaker. The Prime Minister is a lawyer, he has certain suggestions that he can make, but I can seek my own counsel in this regard and the Leader of the Opposition can. He failed to remind us as well that under the very same section that it is an offence to vote in this Honourable House if you are not entitled to vote and it is a matter for the DPP. That is a forth course of action that can be advised. The point that I am making, if you say that this is the improper place to raise the matter, we will take up where there is the proper avenue, but the record in the House shows that 13 people voted where 12 persons are only entitled to vote. On the face of it that is inaccurate. So you have to decide what should be done. [Interjection] what sir?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: What is inaccurate? That 13 people did not vote?

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: That 12 persons are entitled to vote, yet 13 persons voted. On the face of it, anybody who wasn't present in the House would say there is an error on the record, because only 12 persons are entitled to vote on the Government side, yet the record shows that 13 persons voted. So on the face of it, it is inaccurate. You may want to explain why it happened because 13 persons did vote. But that is not what is reflected here that there were 12 persons entitled to vote, 13 has voted so the record on the face of

it shows that the wrong number of persons at least voted in this House and for somebody looking at it, they would seek to have a correction of that.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay. Thank you very much. Honourable Member, we do not want to prolong this thing. The issue is on the 29th December, 2010, 13 persons voted. The record says 13 persons voted and that is accurate, that is a fact, 13 persons voted. Whether that is right or wrong is a matter that I as Speaker would seek further legal clarification on, but the record must stand, because 13 persons voted and as to whether it is right or wrong is something that I would seek further clarification on. I do not have to do that today, as I have said, I have to seek further clarification on it. Let us move on.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Honourable Members, I wish to announce that Sir Louis Straker will represent the state of St. Vincent and the Grenadines at the funeral of John Osborne. I am not too sure what is the date of that, but I think he will be the one representing the state. Okay. I still also wish to appeal to those persons who are in the possession of cell phones that you need to turn them off or put them on silent because from time to time we make this announcement all the time from time to time they seem to disturb the proceedings and we are prepared to be very serious on that issue. If a Member of the Stranger's Gallery you have a cell phone, please turn it off because if it goes off, I will have to ask you to leave the chamber. Members of the House, please ensure that your cell phones are in order, either that you turn it off or you put it on silent or vibration or whatever. Thank you very much.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Member, it is my duty to make a statement this morning on a matter of important national security. Mr. Speaker, during the recently held General Elections of December 13th 2010, there was substantial funding by the two major drugs, that is to say, cocaine trafficking and money laundering entities among others in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in support of the Opposition NDP and certain of its candidates.

The electoral defeat of the NDP shocked these two major cocaine trafficking and money laundering entities. There is strong and ample evidence of real quality that these two cocaine trafficking and money laundering operators decided in a coordinated way to continue their efforts to destabilise the country and seek to remove the ULP administration from office including a conspiracy to kill the duly elected Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

During the recent budget consultations, I sketched this security challenge to various stakeholders including the business community. Today, I inform the Parliament and people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and provide as much detail as I am permitted to reveal. I emphasise, Mr. Speaker, I provide as much detail as I am

permitted in the circumstances to reveal. The basic facts as provided by impeccable intelligent sources are as follows:

1. Within one week of the General Elections the conspiracy to kill the Prime Minister was hatched by the two cocaine trafficking and money laundering entities. The security authorities obtained very reliable information about the person who was recruited to carry out the deed. Immediately, a manhunt was launched to apprehend this contract killer who had hitherto been charged for an offence of murder, but was acquitted. This manhunt lasted for in excess of one week. He knew that the police was in search of him, as the police dragnet tightened he made arrangements to flee to a neighbouring island by a speed boat. Acting on precise information, the police apprehended him at a bay where he was awaiting the arrival of a speed boat to transport him. He was arrested and charged for serious offences, not relating to the conspiracy of murder and was denied bail. He is still in custody at Her Majesty's Prisons. The sole reason that he was not charged with the offence of conspiracy to murder was because the security authorities are keen on protecting the most valuable intelligence sources. This operation had yielded among other things, one high powered assault weapon. The security authorities know of the existence of another which had been in the contract killer's possession, but that is yet to be found.
2. Within 36 hours of the prisoner's incarceration he obtained a cell phone at the prisons. In this way he kept in contact with those who had hired him. As a consequence, the police carried out a raid at the prisons and found eight cell phones in the prison cells. None was on the person of any prisoner; the phones were confiscated by the police.
3. Within 24 hours of that contract killer's apprehension by the police, one of the cocaine traffickers, money launderers contacted another local operative to do a job. This person expressed an interest to do the job, but declined when he learnt that the target was the Prime Minister.
4. As a consequence of this refusal by this other local prospective contract killer to do the job, the two cocaine traffickers money launderers secured the services of a Trinidadian to kill the Prime Minister. This Trinidadian entered St. Vincent and the Grenadines, despite diligent and extensive searches; the police are yet to apprehend this Trinidadian. The search continues.
5. In the meantime, the first contract killer who was in custody secured another cell phone and was in touch briefly with certain persons outside the prisons. The security authorities are yet to find that phone. The contract killer is now in restrictive custody at the prisons.

Before, during and after the election campaign I have been warning the nation about the dangerous activities of some cocaine traffickers and money launderers. Over the last five years or so, the security authorities including the police and the Financial Intelligence Unit have been very active in securing the safety and wellbeing of our country and its people. The security authorities and the Income Tax Department have been placing immense pressure on the major operatives in these two cocaine trafficking and money laundering entities. Much success has been chalked up against them including the incarceration of at least one major player, especially hard hit

have been their money and other assets. These cocaine traffickers and money launderers are feeling the heat and have become desperate, knowingly or unknowingly, some political and social personalities have become enmeshed in their operations. I say without a shadow of a doubt that these cocaine traffickers and money launderers are actively organising and financing efforts to bring down the duly elected ULP government. I say further, on the basis of high quality security information that they have conspired and are still conspiring to kill the Prime Minister.

I assure Vincentians that as long as I am Prime Minister, I shall never allow St. Vincent and the Grenadines to become like some Latin American and other Caribbean Countries where cocaine traffickers and money launderers are allowed the space to successfully build gangs, control territory and communities, perpetrate criminal activities as untouchables and pollute the streams of our democratic and political processes. My government is resolved to give these criminals and their associates at home and in the region absolutely no space to flourish. Believe me I am not afraid of them. I repeat, they will be accorded no space to flourish. I advise those who are tempted for whatever reason to ally themselves to these criminals to stay in their batting crease.

Mr. Speaker, the toxic rhetoric from some quarters in providing encouragement to those who have a tendency towards disorder, sorry, the toxic rhetoric from some quarters is providing encouragement to those who have a tendency towards disorder and violence. Yesterday, one person on a radio station public called for the removal of the government by any means necessary. That is through violence if necessary.

One month ago, the ULP secured an unambiguous victory grounded in legality and popular legitimacy. Within that month, the Opposition has called for the Government's removal. Cocaine traffickers and money launderers are conspiring actively with others to kill the Prime Minister and on the public airways, people are being exhorted by some to use any means necessary to remove a democratically elected government. That is what the vast majority of law abiding and right thinking Vincentians are faced with.

I am sure that they would resist those who are bent on disorder, mayhem and criminal activities. Finally, permit me, Mr. Speaker, to say that I have weighed all the relevant considerations in this matter including those of National Security, on-going investigations and my personal safety and have concluded that the correct course is to inform the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines about this matter. The law abiding, right thinking people of our country are the ultimate bulwark against these nefarious criminals and conspirators. I am obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Clarification.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Mr. Speaker, I have just listened to the Prime Minister's Ministerial Statement. Is the Prime Minister saying that the New Democratic Party is involved in any plot or in any way with those persons that he has named?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I do not know if the Prime Minister wants to clarify what he has made in the statement.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, you have read my mind correctly. I have made a ministerial statement on a matter of national security and I have revealed that which I wish to reveal at this time. I have the responsibility for National Security. The last occasion when I took the Honourable Leader of the Opposition into my confidence, he broke it. I do not intend to answer any of his questions on these matters, either here or outside, which touched upon National Security which I am not obliged to answer. Indeed, the rules of this Honourable House would prevent him from asking me certain kinds of questions. The very rules as they relate to certain issues of National Security and there is good reason for that. I am obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

PETITIONS

HONOURABLE MAXWELL CHARLES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I wish to bring before this Honourable House seven petitions from seven different church organisations. The petitioners have been mandated by their respective churches to seek legal incorporation as the body corporate of the said churches.

Permit me Mr. Speaker to read this petitions:

1. The humble petition of the Trustees of the Christian Pilgrim Faith Church.
2. The humble petition of the Trustees of the Gospel Halls of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.
3. The humble petition of the Trustees of the Faith Pentecostal New Covenant Ministries.
4. The humble petition of the Trustees of the Our Lady of Guadeloupe Home.
5. The humble petition of the Trustees of the Green Hill Pentecostal Church.
6. The humble petition of the Trustees of the St. Peter's Spiritual Baptist Church.
7. The humble petition of the Trustees of the Good News Bible Church Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay them all before this Honourable House. I am much obliged.

PAPERS

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to lay the following documents on the table. The Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year 2011 with projections for 2012 and 2013, those would have already been circulated to Honourable Members.

Mr. Speaker, it is my duty as Chairman of the Standing Committee of Finance which met yesterday and considered the estimates of Revenue and Expenditure and the Appropriation Bill which are requirements under the law and they have been approved and the minutes I have just signed and these are laid on the table of this Honourable House.

Mr. Speaker, there are some corrections which arose out of the Standing Committee and Finance and there are some changes. I should point out that they were very minor and they have been accommodated within the global figures and they have not therefore altered in any material way the Estimates as they are presented, but for the purposes of accuracy where those minor changes and corrections have been made as the Standing Committee of Finance is empowered to do, they have been circulated this morning and constitute part of the Estimates which have been laid on the floor of this Honourable House.

QUESTIONS FOR ORAL ANSWERS

1. *The Honourable Arnhim Eustace (Leader of the Opposition), asked the Honourable Minister of Health, Wellness and the Environment:*

What is the current status of the Cuban Health Integration Programme Audit.

HONOURABLE CECIL MC KIE: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to respond to the question as posed by the Leader of the Opposition. Mr. Speaker, the Director of Audit and the Audit Department initiated an audit of the Cuban Integrated Health Programme for the period 2007 to April 2010 during the year 2010 as they are authorised to do. Dated 30th July 2010, the Director of Audit provided the Permanent Secretary and the Ministry of Health with a report which they received on 6th August 2010. The Permanent Secretary issued a response dated 22nd September 2010 in which he addressed several issues as highlighted in the special audit report received. These responses were received by the Director of Audit on 24th September 2010. Since then, there was no correspondence received from the Director of Audit in this regard. Much obliged.

2. *Dr. the Honourable Godwin Friday (Northern Grenadines), asked the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, National Security, Legal Affairs and Grenadines Affairs:*

What is the current completion date for the Argyle International Airport, and what is the projected date for commencement of commercial flights at the Argyle International Airport.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, the projected date for the completion of the Argyle International Airport is the end of 2012. The commencement date for commercial flights is shortly thereafter. I have a long two-page, three-page answer by IADC, but I am not going to read the answer to provide more information this morning. I will do so at another time, because I really want to get on with the debate on the Estimates.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: If the Prime Minister has a written answer, perhaps he could provide the written answer instead of the waiting for another time.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, had he asked a question for a written answer, I would have supplied him with the written answer. He asked for an oral answer, I answered him. I could have provided additional background information. He asked a question with two parts, when would the airport finished. I told him the end of 2012. He asked me when commercial operations will start. I told him shortly thereafter. I answered both parts of the question.

3. *The Honourable St. Clair Leacock (Central Kingstown), asked the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, National Security, Legal Affairs and Grenadines Affairs:*

a. *How many houses in Central Kingstown were affected by Hurricane Tomas;*

b. *What was the total cost of the damage to these houses;*

c. *How many of these home owners have been assisted thus far;*

d. *What is the total amount of money expended to date; and*

e. *Can all those who have been impacted and have not received any assistance so far, expect help within a reasonable time frame.*

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, I am among other things the Minister for National Emergencies. This is a question which relates to Housing. I am not the Minister of Housing. The question is wrongly directed.

4. *The Honourable Roland Matthews (North Leeward) asked the Honourable Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Rural Transformation to please state:*

a. *Is there any plan/programme to propagate non-banana planting materials to farmers whose crops were destroyed during the passage of Hurricane Tomas; and*

b. *If in the affirmative, when would these plants/materials be ready for distribution to farmers.*

HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL: Mr. Speaker, since joining the Ministry of Agriculture in 1975, there would have been programmes to assist farmers in planting materials over the years, this has continued until today. As a matter of fact, bananas were introduced in 2003 and we continue to assist in both banana and non-banana. And as it relates to Hurricane Tomas and its passing, the Ministry has intensified its work where plants, including plantains, dasheen, pineapples, sweet potatoes, yams, Tannia, cinnamon, nutmegs, cocoa, mauby, clove, breadfruit, citrus, mangoes, golden apples, avocado and carambola, as well as vegetable seedlings. All these are available to our farmers throughout the year and they will be distributed accordingly. I am much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: In light of the answer given to question 3, I wonder if the Honourable Member would want to proceed with question 5 and 6.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATTHEWS: For your guidance, Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask the (b) section of that question to the Prime Minister responsible for disaster preparedness and so on. My question is how many houses in North Leeward were affected by Hurricane Tomas.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, please, of the gallery I caution you.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATTHEWS: That is the (a) section of the question please, Mr. Speaker.

5. *The Honourable Roland Matthews (North Leeward), asked the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, National Security, Legal Affairs and Grenadines Affairs:*

a. *How many houses in North Leeward were affected by Hurricane Tomas;*

b. *How many of these home owners have been assisted thus far;*

c. *Can all those who have been impacted and have not received any assistance so far, expect help within a reasonable time frame.*

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, under the rules of this House, Honourable Members must familiarise themselves with the portfolios of the respective persons to whom in this Honourable House the Ministers to whom questions to be directed. If the Minister who is not available to answer the question and the question is properly directed, the rules provide for someone else, the Attorney General, but she is a public officer, and the practice has been that the Prime Minister would answer. But the Minister of Housing is present. I was told, Mr. Speaker, that the Opposition is well prepared and they are coming here vigorously [laughter] get the portfolios right. I am obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Senator Leacock, just a minute please. I have asked, sorry, Honourable Member, 10 years you have been here so you could understand the mistake. [Interjection] yes sir, I hope so.

Honourable Member for Central Kingstown, yes, I have tried to give some guidance a while ago on the questions 5 and 6 in light of the answer given to question number 3, the Honourable Member persist in asking the question. The (a) part as far as I am concerned is no different from the (a) part in question number 3 and the answer was given as the Honourable Prime Minister not being the Minister of Housing and these questions should be correctly addressed to the particular Ministry.

Again, I am going to ask in relation to question 6 if you would want to persist with that question. Honourable Senator, I will listen to you. Honourable Member, sorry, [laughter] I am sorry.

HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLAIRE LEACOCK: It takes some getting accustomed to, Mr. Speaker, but we simply have to live with it.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Well, they still call me Senator you know. People address me Senator all the time.

HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLAIRE LEACOCK: Well I too refer to you privately as Senator.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: You too refer to me as Senator. Well right.

HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLAIRE LEACOCK: Mr. Speaker, to the extent that a number of questions are followed on 3 and I am not so sure that you did in fact rule on question 3 that a question posed as to the impact of Hurricane Tomas is not properly speaking presented to the Minister responsible for disaster preparation in this country, because our records would indicate that NEMO has a responsibility as a unit within the Prime Minister's Ministry to report to the Prime Minister on damages and he in fact has reported nationally on such issues. I asked, Mr. Speaker, that you rule so that I will be clear in my own mind that we have been improper to ask of the Prime Minister with respect to Hurricane Tomas activities.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: In relation to the question on Housing, if the questions were formulated differently, then they probably could have been addressed to the Prime Minister. They have been formulated differently. I am saying, as they relate to houses and Housing and how the housing situation was affected, I say the question and I rule that they are improperly directed. That is the ruling.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: If you may permit me, question number 4 which the Honourable Member for North Leeward just asked in respect of Hurricane Tomas concerning non-banana planting materials and so on, if that was asked of me, I would say it was improperly put. He correctly asked that question to the Minister of Agriculture and he received an answer. Had he put the question on Housing to the Minister of Housing, it would have been answered. Mr. Speaker, I have all the answers here and I will give the press. I have all the answers here about the numbers, but follow the rules. That is all I asked them to do.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question number 7..., Honourable Senator Baptiste. [Interjection] no he said that he is not asking 6. He indicated that he is not asking 6. [Interjection] hello, what did I say? [Interjection] no, I never refer to him as a Senator. I said, Senator Baptiste. No, I said he said he is not answering. I did not say senator. I said he said.

6. *The Honourable Nigel Stephenson (South Leeward), asked the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, National Security, Legal Affairs and Grenadines Affairs:*

a. *How many houses in South Leeward were affected by Hurricane Tomas;*

b. *How many of these home owners have been assisted thus far;*

c. *Can all those who have been impacted and have not received any assistance so far, expect help within a reasonable time frame.*

7. *The Honourable Anesia Baptiste (Opposition Senator), asked the Honourable Minister of National Mobilisation, Social Development, the Family, Persons with Disabilities, Youth, Sports and Culture to please state;*

What is the total number of persons listed on the Public Assistance Programme as at December 31st, 2010.

HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, as at the 31st December 2010 Mr. Speaker, there was 5509 persons listed on Public Assistant Programme list. I am much obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay, that brings us to the end of question time.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

1. 2011 ESTIMATES OF ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move under Standing Order 12(5) that the proceedings of today's Sitting be exempted from the provisions of the Standing Order Hours of Sitting.

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

Question put and agreed to.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the motion standing in my name on the Order Paper regarding the 2011 Estimates.

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 that 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 a triennial basis.

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable House of Assembly do adopt the Estimates for the financial year ending 31st December, 2011.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Honourable House note the projections for the financial years ending 31st December, 2012 and 31st December, 2013.

Question put and agreed to.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the motion having been moved and seconded is now up for debate. Any debate? The mover of the motion, I just need to remind you, you would have one hour to make his presentation and any other person debating the motion would have 45 minutes after which the mover would have half an hour to wind up. Honourable Prime Minister.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, before commencing the debate on the motion itself, I seek your indulgence to dedicate the presentation of these Estimates to the hardworking staff of the Ministry of Finance and Planning and to the other Permanent Secretaries and Senior Technical Officers in the various Ministries and to dedicate these Estimates especially to a very professional and hardworking Budget Director, Edmond Jackson who was at the centre of the preparation of these Estimates over the recent period, a period which was one of immense difficulty for him, when his mother was very ill and in fact, before the conclusion of the preparation of the Estimates, his mother died. Indeed, last night at 10 O'clock he was still at the office doing work in relation to the matters which are before us today and for next week. I had to plead with him please to go home.

Mr. Speaker, public servants often get a lot of criticism. Sometimes, it is reasonable and fair, often times unreasonable and unfair. We do not often give credit and praise as we ought to do when they excel, when they go beyond the call of duty and in the circumstances, I say, "thanks to Edmond Jackson for his heroic effort in this matter." His work has touched me immensely. His mom would be buried at the Seventh Day Adventist Church on Sunday at 2:30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, may I as a prelude make two..., before I address the Estimates, two or three important points which this Honourable House ought to be aware of. Some Members would probably be aware of and others not. The section 70(1) of the Constitution says, “the Minister for the time being responsible for finance, shall cause to be prepared and laid before the House before or not later than 30 days after the commencement of each financial year Estimates of revenue and expenditure of St. Vincent and the Grenadines for that financial year. That means that these Estimates by virtue of this Constitution must be before this House by the 30th January this year. Normally, we have the Estimates in December. But because of the General Elections in the mid December thereabout and then followed by Christmas, clearly it was not possible to have the Estimates presented before the end of last year. And this is not the first time that this is happening.

Some persons mistakenly believe that I have four months before I present the Estimates. That is not so at all. I have to present the Estimates to this Honourable House within 30 days of the commencement of the Financial Year. What happens is that I can by the reading of the Constitution, present the Appropriation Bill outside of the 30 day period and the Financial Administration Act provides for a period up to four months for the spending of monies without the Appropriation. But we wanted to get this matter over with as we always do within the first month. And during this time of this month there are some people who feel that nothing happens until the Budget is passed, that is not so. Because under the law, on the 31st December, I signed the provisional General Warrant which permits expenditure on the recurrent side to be up to one twelfth of recurrent expenditure for the preceding year and capital spending can proceed, but capital spending has to proceed under the signature of the Minister of Finance. So the Government continues and work goes on. I think it is important that I outlined these provisions so that there would be clarity in everyone’s minds.

Mr. Speaker, and before I begin the debate itself, I want to say that I would very much have wished the Estimates to have been in hands of Honourable Members by the weekend just gone, but a series of circumstances, some of which I have alluded to earlier made that not possible. That is the way we have been proceeding on this side of the House, but the Honourable Members would have had it for two, three days before today and certainly they have it, the Estimates in excess of one week before the Budget Debate.

In the old days, Mr. Speaker, when I came to this Honourable House first, after Sir James presented his budget speech and it was done..., the Estimates and the Appropriation Bill was presented as one, on the very night, the Monday night I will be given the Estimates and I am required to reply Tuesday Morning. So I just put that within the context.

Mr. Speaker, and if you may permit me again as Leader of the House to indicate how we intend to proceed with the rest of our Order Paper and I do so, so that I can assist those who would wish...,

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Just a minute, Prime Minister, before you go on. I have a request here from a Member in relation to the temperature, it seems to be very cold, and so I do not know if that is the general feeling, because I may want to accommodate that Member and turn one of the units off or so. So I do know if that is the general feeling. I know they were serviced very recently, up to yesterday, so I do not know if they are. It is all right for me, extremely all right, but it is not just me. So maybe we can turn off one or so.

Which one we can turn off? Anyone..., not the one behind me for sure, maybe somewhere in the middle there [laughter].

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, I am without air-conditioning at the Prime Minister's Office for so many months now that it is a bit of a luxury when I get it [laughter].

Mr. Speaker, it has been brought to my attention that there are two Bills on the Order Paper, item 2, the Criminal Procedure Amendment Code Bill and 3, the Representation of the People Amendment Bill that there is some additional public interest in these matters. These Bills would be considered only after the Appropriation Bill which is number 1 on the list is dealt with and approved and the Appropriation Bill the debates on it, which the Budget Debate usually takes a week and that debate should wrap up by Friday. There are fewer Ministers now than before, Mr. Speaker, and Ministers speak at least half an hour longer than other Members, so I would expect the period for the debate on the Appropriation Bill will be shorter on that account alone and we usually wind up on Friday. So that I would expect that we would probably do it on Thursday evening or Friday morning. So that I can safely say, all things being equal, that is to say there is no new act intervening that the Order Paper would follow its normal course. So those who may wish to come to the House or do whatever in relation to items 2 and 3 I am facilitating them so they can go around and do their work and so on and so forth. And then of course, Mr. Speaker, after that well we would in the process also addresses the Resolution in respect of the overdraft.

So Mr. Speaker, my time begins now. That is why I made the point and sought your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, because all of those matters, they are not connected to the debate on the Estimates. Is that a correct understanding, Mr. Speaker?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: It would be like any other Member would have gotten my indulgence on...,

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Estimates of revenue and expenditure for the 2011 fiscal year amount to \$786.48 million. This represents a decline of \$126.99 million or 13.9% when compared with the total Estimates for the year 2010. The contraction of total planned expenditure for 2011 is as a result of the reduction in the Capital Budget which has moved from \$303.3 million in 2010 to \$176.67 million in 2011, a decline of \$126.63 million.

There are two main issues here that account for the change. First, in the 2011 Capital Budget we have attempted to balance efficaciously more than ever, prudence and enterprise. By this I mean that even as we keep an eye on debt sustainability by ensuring that the investment programme does not place undue pressure on the public debt, we have made sure that the Capital Budget is well structured in terms of sectorial allocations and sized to give the economy the fiscal nudge it requires at this time and in that sense, Mr. Speaker, the Capital Budget has a number which we feel is comfortably implementable within the timeframe.

Secondly, as Members of this Honourable House may recall, there were three items in last year's budget, in the 2010 Capital Budget, that accounted for around 38% of the 2010 capital programme. These were the financial

stabilisation programme of \$40 million that is the sum connected to the proposal for the new company in relation to British American Insurance Company; the Argyle International Airport \$54 million; and the purchase of Coast Guard Vessels \$19.1 million. These items amounted last year to \$113 million. So when you took away those items from the Capital Budget you will see that the Capital Budget was otherwise smaller than the \$303 indicated because of these big ticket items.

In the Estimates for 2011, the following provisions have been made for these items; financial stabilisation programme \$10 million, the Argyle International Airport \$21.6 million and the purchase of the Coast Guard Vessels in terms of an outlay of expenditure from the Government zero. I would explain the reasons for the reduction in these projects. The provision for the financial stabilisation programme has been reduced from \$40 million to \$10 million since the new Government of Trinidad and Tobago has opted for a different approach to restructure British American and I would have more to say on this matter in my Budget Address on Monday. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, yesterday afternoon as Chairman of the subcommittee on insurance of the Monetary Council, I held a meeting, a regional meeting on this by way of teleconference to finalise the positions in relation to what I had alluded to earlier plan B which we have been discussing with some variations with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. But plan A in terms of the new BAICO Company as agreed upon by the former Manning administration that is not on the cards anymore with the current administration in Trinidad and Tobago. But I will speak to the issue of the solution towards the BAICO matter in my address.

Regarding the purchase of the Coast Guard Vessels from the Malaysian company, the supplier due to the impact of the global financial crisis was unable to provide the Government with the suppliers credit financing, we had made the arrangement, a kind of hire purchase arrangement to pay for them over seven years, but because the contract would have been signed this year, sorry, last year it had to enter the accounts on the date when the contract was signed for the \$19 million. But they ran into difficulties with international economic meltdown, but you know we are a blessed Government, and just as that problem was creating some headache for me how to finance it right away, President Obama made good on his promise to assist us in the region under what is called, 'The Secure Seize Programme' and he sent Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton to us and this year, we would be receiving two Coast Guard Vessels courtesy of the Obama administration, including a Coast Guard Facility down in Canouan. So where we would have had to lay out the money ourselves, where you see it entered..., where you see the sum in the Estimates it is not a sum which is coming from us.

In the 2011 fiscal year, we anticipate that the Argyle International Airport would place less reliance on funding from the central Government since, more financing will become available from the sale of Government lands and other Government owned assets and work on the Argyle International Airport will continue apace in 2011. So rather than having \$54 million as we had last year, we have \$21.6 million this year. So when you look at the numbers, they come down, but we have the reasons and for each of those I pointed out, so that rather than having \$40 million for the issue of financial stabilisation programme, we have \$10 million and in regard of the Coast Guard Vessels in terms of their outlay, it is no outlay on our part.

On the recurrent side of the Budget, total recurrent outlays for 2011 amount to \$609.81 million made up of recurrent expenditure of \$532.07 million and debt servicing of \$77.74 million. The total recurrent spending inclusive of debt payments is estimated to decline by \$0.36 million or 0.1% over the amount budgeted for the

2010 fiscal year. The 2010 budget is funded by current revenue of \$502.75 million and capital receipts of \$281.73 million. A summary of the Budget is shown on page Roman numeral (i) and Mr. Speaker, especially for the newer Members of this House, I would like them really to look at the financial summary, and if I may just before I go into any detail, to highlight certain things so they are getting a sense of snapshot as to what we are about.

One of the things you would have noticed, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, is that this financial summary indicates that there is a budgeted current account deficit of \$27.31 million. If you look at the 532.068 which is the details of the current expenditure and you look at the current revenue on the left side of the page, tax revenue and non-tax revenue, you see \$504.7 million you do the subtraction and you will get \$27.31 million.

Mr. Speaker, I want to give the assurance that it is not anticipated that the budget out turn for the year would yield such a deficit on the current account. Prudent, fiscal management during the year should result indeed in a small surplus by the end of the year. Mr. Speaker, I want to note that in 2010 we budgeted for a current account deficit of \$20.5 million, but we ended up with a current account surplus of \$1.3 million and indeed, we had an overall surplus of \$12.56 million because of the manner in which we implemented the Budget. So the Budget provides the frame and it is an important frame, but we have a sensible manager of the Budget process to have it implemented in a manner which balances prudence and enterprise.

Mr. Speaker, if we look at the broad numbers so you get the snapshot and I asked Honourable Members to look at the Estimates for 2011 and compare with the approved Estimates for 2010 and you would see that there is an increase for wages and salaries, there is significant increase for pensions and NIS moved from \$39.3 million to \$46 million. So retirement benefits are growing very sharply and would address that question in a short while.

Other transfers, and I would address those, moved from \$106.3 million to \$113.08 million. Interest payments have declined from \$61.86 million from the approved Estimates last year to \$52.3 million this year and goods and services has declined slightly and if one looks at amortisation, Honourable Members would note that the amortisation of the public debt the Estimate for this year is \$71.7 million compared to \$75 million last year and of course, in my Budget presentation I will give a comprehensive analysis of the debt profile and the reasons why we are seeing a decline in interest payments and the decline in the extent of amortisation.

Mr. Speaker, on the Capital Expenditure which I would go through in some detail a little later, but I am just looking at the snap shot now, Honourable Members would notice that economic affairs is the most significant sum of \$86.9 million and we see Education of \$33 million on the capital side. And the financing of it, you see from the capital receipts which are there, grants, external loans, local loans, capital revenue and other receipts. And it is an important page to look at as one proceeds.

Mr. Speaker, as a result of the General Elections, a number of portfolio changes was implemented. Also a number of new recurrent programmes have been created under various Ministries. The following is a summary of these changes and how they are reflected in the Estimates. The office of the Prime Minister now includes three programmes previously allocated to the Ministry of Telecommunications, Science and Technology. These are Information Technology Services Department, Telecommunications Science and Technology and the

National Centre for Technological Innovation. These have come from the Ministry of Telecommunications which portfolio is now assigned to the Prime Minister.

And a new Ministry, the Ministry of National Reconciliation, Public Service Information, Labour and Ecclesiastical Affairs have been created. This new Ministry is shown on pages 103 – 119. The Department of Culture has been transferred to the Ministry of National Mobilisation and Social Development, also the Youth Empowerment Service which was previously classified as a capital project is now included as a new recurrent programme under the Ministry. It has now been going on for 10 years and it make sense indeed to comply with the international classifications and rules; we sensibly put it now under the recurrent heading.

Two programmes have been created in the Ministry of Education, two new programmes. These are Education Research, Information and Communications Technology Programme which was establish to strengthen the Education Planning Function, effectively integrate Information Communication Technology into the teaching and learning process and to provide leadership in the various ICT initiatives in the Education Sector including the one laptop per student initiative.

And secondly in the Ministry of Education, there is a National Qualifications Department and this was created to monitor standards for the accreditation delivery and assessment of programmes in Technical and Vocational Education and Training and to provide for the certification of skills in the field. Honourable Members would recall that in the last Parliament, we passed the requisite legislation to proceed in this manner.

And thirdly a new programme, sorry, the two in Education, a new programme called “the Energy Unit” has been established under the Minister of National Security. This is found in pages 316 – 317. This programme which was previously classified as a capital project is created to promote energy conservation measures, explore alternative energy sources and to establish and monitor improved energy saving standards and the Electoral Department now falls under the Ministry of National Security.

In the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, which is now called Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Transformation, Forestry and Fisheries since the rural transformation programme is now allocated to that Ministry. The marriage of Agriculture and Rural Transformation should yield some useful synergies that could amplify the work of that Ministry. The work of the Ministry of Transport and Works has been broadened with the inclusion of Urban Development and Local Government portfolios. A new programme call the Integrated Medical Assistance Programme is established in the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment. This programme can be found on pages 472 – 473 and was previously budgeted for on the capital side.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Consumer Affairs has a new programme, titled Foreign Policy and Research founded on pages 528 – 529 and the span of control of the Ministry of Tourism has been expanded to include Industry. This Ministry is also responsible for private sector development through the agency such as the Centre for Enterprise Development and the Bureau of Standards.

Mr. Speaker, I have taken Honourable Members through all of these to facilitate in their reading of the Estimates. All of these changes have resulted in a reduction in the number of Ministries by two and some costs savings has shown in the summary of recurrent expenditure by Ministry on page Roman numeral (iv).

I turn substantively, Mr. Speaker, to the recurrent Estimates. The recurrent revenue for the fiscal year 2011 is estimated at \$504.75 million. This figure represents the modest increase of 0.5% or \$2.31 million over the approved Revenue Estimates for 2010. The tax revenue will account for 92 % of the total current revenue for 2011. While revenue from non-tax sources is expected to contribute 8%, revenue from taxes is anticipated to grow by 3.1% as inflows from all tax types, except for taxes on domestic goods and transactions are expected to increase as the economy is projected to return to growth in 2011. Revenue from non-tax sources is estimated to decline in 2011 when compared with the approved budget for 2010. The 2011 budget the Government is expected to collect \$40.61 million from this source. This figure is \$11.68 million or 22.4% below the 2010 approved Estimates. The main source of this reduction is the European Budget Support Grant of \$16 million that was included in 2010 in the Revenue Estimates, but is not available for a repeat in 2011. The details of the current revenue are to be found Honourable Members on pages 1 – 12 in the 2011 Estimates.

Expenditure – the total estimated recurrent expenditure for 2011 is \$609.81 million. This figure represents a marginal decline of 0.1% or \$0.36 million when compared with the approved recurrent expenditure estimates for 2010. Two areas of the recurrent expenditure budget are estimated to increase in 2011. These are wages and salaries. They are going up by \$6.02 million or 2.5%, transfers by \$14.4 million or 9.9%. The remaining two categories of recurrent expenditure are expected to decrease in 2011, these are, as I had indicated before, debt service, which would decline by 12.1% or by \$18.09 million and goods and services a decline of 3.5% or \$2.69 million.

The summary of the 2011 recurrent expenditure budget by economic categories is as follows: Wages and salaries \$243.62 million, Pensions and NIS \$46 million, Other transfers \$113.89 million, Debt service \$131 million, Goods and services \$75.3 million, giving a grand total of \$609.81 million. A number of useful summaries of recurrent spending plans of the Government for 2011 are to be found on Roman numerals pages 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 of these Estimates.

Wages and salaries – the 2011 wage bill is comprised as follows: salaries, \$209.88 million; allowances, \$17.26 million; and wages \$16.48 million, giving an aggregate of \$242.62 million. The modest increase in the budgeted salaries and wages bill is as a consequence of two main factors. Well three:

1. The increase in the wage bill associated with the payment of automatic annual increments to public servants. And two, the addition of several new positions in the vital areas of Government of tax administration, health and the judiciary. Among these are the following positions and I will go through them very quickly, a diligent reader of the Estimates will pick them up but it will take you a much longer time, so perhaps if I indicate them to Honourable Members it would facilitate their reading of the document, their study of it.

- a. In the Ministry of Finance at the Customs and Excise, Inland Revenue Departments and Central Planning Department a total of 10 posts were created to strengthen the capacity of these agencies. And you will find at the Customs and Excise, eight additional Customs Guards were provided to facilitate the 24 hour operations at the Port in Campden Park and to reduce the overtime costs to the private sector.
2. At the Inland Revenue Department one system administrator has been provided to strengthen the IT capacity at that Department and two positions in the Valuation Division were upgraded to strengthen capacity to administer the property tax.
 - a. The judiciary received 10 new positions. However, there is only net increase in staffing of six since four existing positions were allocated from staff of the Ministries that were closed. So we were able to shift around some of the personnel to effect some savings. These positions have been provided to allow for the implementation of the new criminal procedure rules introduced by the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court and to strengthen the prosecutorial services of the state. These positions are as follows: at the Registry and High Court, one criminal division administrator and three clerks and those were reallocated from discontinued programmes. The Magistrate Department one case manager and one senior court clerk. At the DPP's Office an additional two crown counsel, one executive officer and one clerk.
 - b. The health service has been strengthened by the inclusion of some 27 health professionals. At the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital in the medical and nursing staff, we have had augmentation by way of two medical officers, two doctors, three interns, one senior registrar who is another medical doctor, but the position going up and six staff nurses. At the community health programme, we have four district medical officers, two pharmacists, one foot care practitioner, there has been quite a demand for foot care practitioners, and we have to extend the medical services, and two ambulance drivers and one male attendant. And at the rural hospitals and health centres there is an additional staff with nurses, midwife and four staff nurses.

Mr. Speaker, I should point out in relation to salary increases for public servants, and I put that category broadly, public servants, teachers, nurses, police officers, for the year 2011 the Teachers Union and the Public Service Union have agreed that we will defer for later in the year the issue of addressing the 3%. The Police Welfare Association has asked that they consult their membership which is fine.

Retiring Benefits and NIS – Mr. Speaker, on that issue I will say more in my budget presentation. Retiring benefits and NIS, in 2011 the amount provided to pay pensions to retired civil servants and Government's counterpart contribution to the NIS for civil servants currently employed is \$46 million. This figure is up by \$6.8 million or 17.3% over the approved budget of 2010. The amount is comprised of retirement benefits \$37 million, NIS Contribution \$9 million; \$46 million. The retirement benefits component which includes pensions to retired civil servants continues to be the main driver for the persistent increase in this spending category.

Over the years, this area of public spending has increased rapidly. Just a decade ago, in 2001 a sum of \$13.84 million was paid out as pensions. This figure reached \$23.42 million by 2010 an increase of 69.2% or an

average annual increase of 6.9%. The question of pension reform must be placed on the policy agenda in the medium term. Mr. Speaker, I just want to put this in some graphic way. We are having a lot of studies done by professionals on pensions and it is a matter which I have been educating myself with comparative studies around the world and there has been a pension reform commission in the OECS, the currency union and they have reported. This is an issue which as a people we have to address in a balanced manner to ensure continued security for persons who have worked, social security for persons who have worked, but to have it structured in a manner which does not end up exploding in our faces. I can take the position that by 2030 that I will not be around when the matter is going to become..., 2030.

I will not be around here in 2030. I did not tell you what time I will leave before 2030, but seriously, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, the data indicate that by 2030 the normal situation would be that persons who are retired when you take both their pension from the Consolidated Fund and what they get from the NIS, when you combine them together...,

HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLAIRE LEACOCK: Is the Honourable Prime saying that he would be dead in 2030? I was not clear on this.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Oh come on.

HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLAIRE LEACOCK: No, I was not clear.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: We are discussing serious business.

HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLAIRE LEACOCK: I am serious, I did not understand you.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Oh, I mean.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: 2030, he say he will not be around wherever.

HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLAIRE LEACOCK: I got it.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I mean, my mother is 92 now, it is quite possible that I will be around in 2030, but I would not be here in 2030. Yes, yes, why you want me to leave sooner than the good Lord is ready for me? I thought you were a Catholic like me. I mean what sort of thing..., as a good Catholic you would know that not all prayers are answered. If they are served up, Mr. Speaker, if we may just divert for a moment theologically, if they are not served up with a pure heart the good Lord would look askance at such prayer and may in fact harm those who pray without a clean heart. You have some resident theologians who can advise you on this subject [laughter].

Mr. Speaker, the very serious point that I am making, by 2030 the normal situation is going to be, unless there is pension reform, that when you add the pension you get from the Consolidated Fund with what you get from the NIS most of which is contributed by the employer, the Government, when you add them together the pension

you receive would be more than the salary which you were getting when you left your job and then the younger people then will say, but how can we sustain this? And not only would the younger people say so, the numbers would not be sustainable in terms of the budget. I can take the position on that because I am not going to be around in 2030. I wash my hands of it, because pension reform is a hot political potato. I know that and everyone in this Honourable House knows it, but I have never in my life Shied away from hot political potatoes when I am duty bound to do the right thing. So I raised this as a matter which we all must consider very seriously and I have raised it in the last four or five years with the Public Service Unions.

Other transfers – payments... Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of young persons here in the House and if they serve the people well they will be around here. Some over on that side, fortunately, Senator Leacock is close to me so we will be playing dominoes and draughts in an old people's home or at our respective homes, but we have a number of young people on both sides and I really would not want them to have that imminent problem upon them where a disaster looms. I have to have the foresight to address it before it comes on their plate.

Transfer payments to local, regional, international organisations and individuals in 2011 are expected to amount to \$113.89 million. This figure represents an increase of 7.2% over the approved 2010 budget. The 2011 budgeted transfers are made up as follows: grants and contributions \$77.72 million; training, scholarships and the like \$7.78 million and social welfare payments \$28.39 million giving you \$113.89 million.

Mr. Speaker, if one looks at the..., and I would ask particularly those who are new to the Estimates, if you look in the appendices you will see the grants to local, regional and international organisations. I urge that you study them, I urge that you read them, because there..., some of them are listed..., well all of them are listed and you will see starting from Autonomous Department such as the office of the Leader of the Opposition which gets \$153,000 go all the way down National Broadcasting Corporation gets, and you see through the Ministry of Finance, there are organisations, you take the Community College \$12.5 million and so on and so forth. The Statutory Bodies which gets grants, Tourism Authority, BRAGSA, the Community College, they contribute to the increase, but so too regional and international organisations and one should study to see what we have there. The further details on the grants and contributions are shown on pages 536 – 643 of the Estimates.

Mr. Speaker, in these Estimates as Minister of Finance, I have made an effort to moderate the increase in the contributions, the local, regional and international organisations. And this component of transfers has registered a decline of 6.2% when compared to the budget for last year. Social welfare payments to households, which are an important part to transfers, are budgeted to increase a \$12.99 million or 84.4% in 2011. It is a significant increase reflecting the philosophy of the Government to take care of the marginalised and the poor and also because of the aftermath of Tomas. So notice the increase there \$13 million or 84.4%.

The 2011 budget we have a number of these and I would just highlight the significant ones. A 25% increase in the rate of public assistance that is paid to the indigent poor. This measure will cost close to \$4 million in 2011. I should point out that in addition to the 5,600 persons who are on public assistance and where we have given the hefty increase, we have had to give increases to persons who are outside of the public assistance, like for instance, students who get currently \$80 for their transport to go to school. Secondary school students they are getting \$100. Those who use to get \$100 they are getting \$120 depending on where they live. We have some

angels who are foster mothers; they used to get \$225 for each foster child, now we give them \$275. So the total number in fact of those who receive when you put welfare payments broadly would be in the region of about 6000 persons.

I want to say this, about 1/3 of the persons who are on public assistance are students. Because of universal secondary education, you open the opportunities, you have to help, you have to provide. So I notice some people said, oh it is because you have more poor people. In fact, you have less, but you have a lot of children whom you simply have to assist. Straightforward point, well at least to me and I sincerely believe Mr. Speaker, in Deuteronomy which addresses this question, “the poor in the gates I must take care of them,” I am duty-bound and I am blessed and everything I put my hand unto would be blessed because I do that and this is confirmed, Mr. Speaker, by the book of psalms and it further assures that once I consider the poor, not only am I blessed, but my Lord would protect me in the time of trouble. I believe that sincerely to the bottom of my heart.

Then, Mr. Speaker, so I say this measure would cost almost \$4 million more. Housing support for the victims of Hurricane Tomas \$6.25 million, income support for farmers who have suffered from Hurricane Tomas \$3 million. Please note, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, that the Housing and Income support are temporary measures. So Social Welfare payment next year will revert to a normal trend. There is an increase for public assistance, but there would not be quite the same sums to address post Tomas recovery. Incidentally, the persons who came here, the staff members from the IMF who came to look at it, to look at how we are doing, the normal article for consultation, they were very pleased in the way in which we are handling this particular matter.

Public Debt – as at September 30th, 2010 the total public debt of St. Vincent and the Grenadines amounted to \$1.23 billion, up by 4% over the debt for the period comparative in 2010. The increase in the indebtedness is mainly as a result of 10.9% growth in the external borrowings, domestic borrowing also increased by 3.3% over the period and the public debt is comprised as follows: external debt \$653.2 million which is 53%, domestic debt \$577.64 million almost 47%, the \$131 million required to meet the debt service cost in 2011 would be just about 26% of the current revenue and the debt service requirements for 2011 are made up as follows: interest payments \$53.26 million, amortisation \$71.47 million and the sinking fund contribution \$6 million giving you \$131 million. As I have pointed the interest payments and amortisation they are less this year than last year. I will explain these things in the budget. And Mr. Speaker, for the newer Members again, I please, I ask them to look at pages 629 – 635 so that you will see the itemised listings of the public debt, internal, the domestic debt and the external debt and you can see every single one of them. So it is not a mystery and when people say, you are hiding the debt, I often say, you are going to hide the debt and we have it in the Estimates?

Goods and Services – in 2011 expenditure in this area were estimated to decline by about \$2.7 million. This represents efforts to keep a tight rein on the escalation of operating costs. The cost of electricity continues to be a large cost driver for the Government. In the 2011 budget an increase of 13.5% was provided to take care of electricity arrears. Mr. Speaker and I am going to talk about this more in the budget speech. I am going to be relentless this year. We have set up some machinery to address this question of energy audits and you would see that I put the energy unit in my Ministry now from capital to recurrent and Mr. Speaker, we waste too much

electricity in the public service. I mean there are situations where we are having a meeting in the building, there is no..., contrary to what people are thinking, I am not in a lot of luxury with air-condition because the central air-condition system went, because the building after so many years, it has to be changed, but because of the costs of it, I decided that I would not permit just simply a Cabinet decision to select an entity to do the air-condition. So you had to prepare the documents for tender, there had to be time for tendering and then the post tender arrangements. So it has been a long time that I have been without air-conditioning. I heard on the radio that how the people are sweltering downstairs and I am in the lap of luxury upstairs, come and see the fan that I have. I bear the pain with equanimity. In fact, I was asked if I would put in temporary air-condition in the Cabinet Room and also in my offices, and I said, “no” I would bear the same pain with equanimity like the rest of my staff and the people want to understand why those who work with me, have an affection for me and how I operate, it is because I do not put myself in any elevated position in relation to them. But we waste too much electricity.

I go into a meeting just a week or so ago. We finished the meeting, it was about 6 O'clock and there were persons there who should know to switch off the fans, it was not in my office, and it just struck me that nobody did and I went back, the three fans were still on, the lights were still on. If I did not go back and switch them off, they would have been there all night. We see what happens at the school buildings, I mean, it is really..., we have to do something about this and everybody has to help in the public service with this. We are wasting energy. The cost of energy is now..., the Brent Crude price is now US\$100 a barrel, it is climbing back up. We got to be serious about this. But I can talk about it, I can put pressure, but you have to follow up on it all the time and everybody has to internalise it.

Education – in 2011 the education sector continues to attract a sizeable portion of the national budget. As shown in the functional classification summary on page Roman numbers (ii) the sector accounts for 19.6% or \$119.47 million of the recurrent budget, public order and safety security \$54.12 million or 8.9% of the recurrent expenditure for this year. Economic affairs, the classification includes all the various productive sectors such as agriculture, tourism, construction, transport and communications. A total of \$86.75 million is budgeted for this functional area. This figure represents 14.2% of the recurrent budget of 2011. And if you are to look at the recurrent expenditure by functional classification, you will see general public services, 31.7% or \$193 million; public order and safety, 8.9% or \$54.1 million; economic affairs, \$14.2 million at \$86.7 million; environmental protection, 1.2% at \$7.4 million; housing and community amenities, 2.3% or \$14.24 million; health, 9.4% which is substantial, or \$57.5 million; recreation, culture and religion 1.2% at \$7.4 million; education, 19.6% of the recurrent budget, \$119.4 million; and when you add the capital of \$33.3 million you will see that for education you are having \$152 plus million, social protection 11.5% or \$69.8 million giving you a total of \$609.8.

The Capital Estimates – expenditure, the capital expenditure budget as I have indicated before for this year is \$176.67 million. Two sectors account for 68.1% of the planned capital expenditure in 2011. These are economic affairs which account for 49.2% and education is 18.9% and if you look in the capital Estimates, you will see \$10.2 million for general public services; \$11.56 million for public order and safety; economic affairs \$86.9 million; environmental protection \$2.5; housing and community amenities \$10.9 million; health \$13.5

million; recreation, culture, religion \$3 million; education \$33.3 million; social protection \$4.5 million; those are the capital ones I addressed a little earlier the recurrent.

The 2007 capital programme aims at achieving the following objectives.

1. To stimulate growth in the main productive sectors of transport, tourism, agriculture and construction.
2. To provide the physical infrastructure critical to the modernisation and development of St. Vincent and the Grenadines such as the improved air and seaports.
3. To further stimulate private sector activity by providing the supporting infrastructure to facilitate investment and business growth.
4. To enhance the quality of life for the citizens of St. Vincent and the Grenadines by strategically investing in the areas of health, education, public order and safety, recreation and culture and housing and community amenities.

Economic Affairs – this sector accounts for the largest share of the capital budget for this year. A total of \$87 million has been allocated mainly to upgrade the financial sector, roads, bridges and airport infrastructure. Some of the larger projects in this sector are as follows: ET Joshua improvement \$4 million; Argyle International Airport \$21.6 million; access roads to tourism sites \$4.8 million; the rehabilitation of Colonarie Bridge \$2 million; feeder roads improvement \$2 million; rehabilitation of the Windward Highway \$10.8 million, including payment of retention monies; tourism and private sector development \$1.8 million; financial stabilisation programme \$10 million; micro credit facility \$1 million; support to primary agriculture \$1 million; Tomas rehabilitation agriculture \$3 million; the EGRIP project \$2.7 million.

In education as I have said before capital spending is targeted at \$33.3 million for this year. Among the major projects a basic education too, \$6.9 million, improvement of education through ICT \$10.8 million, the OECS educational development project that is the West St. George Secondary School \$10 million, and to rehabilitate four others.

Expansion of secondary schools \$1 million, Tech Voc Education \$1 million. Public order and safety, you can go through the list and you would see the National ID system, nearly \$1 million; the correctional facility \$2.5 million; renovation of Montrose Police Station, half a million dollars; well the coast guard interceptor vessels you would see the monies between this year and next year, but all would come this year into account. National security enhancement, half a million dollars; construction of police stations you would see monies applied there; in health the modern medical complex, \$8 million; the HIV/AIDS projects, \$2.15 million; refurbishing Milton Cato Memorial Hospital; oxygen plant and bow storage, \$2 million; adaptation to impact of climate change in Bequia \$1.5 million.

Mr. Speaker, there are some monies where we have not put them all in the budget, but which may well come towards the latter part of this year. Take; for instance, the thirty odd million dollars grant which we expect to get from the banana accompanying measures. We could have put them in and bloated the budget, but I did not want to do that, but if the money arrives, we can always enter them by way of a special warrant. Similarly, monies in respect of the 10th EDF programme, we have not put all what we will be able to spend there, but the

money will be available and that is to renovate Milton Cato Memorial Hospital, that is to do work at the psychiatric hospital, to build the two clinics, one in Marriacqua and one in Buccament and so on and so forth. There are several under the focal sector for health under the 10th EDF. So that there are always monies which will out there and because they are grant monies, they can come into account very easily and any Minister of Finance has to say, do I include them, or do I exclude them depending on what is your expectation as to whether they will be available before the end of the financial year.

The capital investment programme for 2011 is financed from the following sources. Domestic receipts \$174.10 million made up of local loans of \$33.4 million, capital revenue of \$25 million and other capital receipts of \$115.7 million. External receipts \$54.66 million and loans \$52.96 million giving you \$107.62 million for external receipts, giving a total source of funds of \$281.72 million.

Mr. Speaker, I have given to the best I can the broad outlines. There are stories behind many of these numbers and some of these stories would be explored not just in the debate which will follow my presentation, but certainly next week when we discuss the Appropriation Bill. Mr. Speaker, I want to say that when you are anticipating growth in the economy as we are projecting for this year, it makes your life in the preparation of the budget a little easier than when you know that you are still in the throes of the international..., the effects of the international recession. All those are issues which we will discuss in the Budget. Maybe some Members will touch on them in these presentations.

The public servants feel very comfortable about this budget, so too the agencies from outside and in the difficult circumstances in the aftermath of the 2008 international economic meltdown and continuing, I think that this is a budget which..., these are estimates and when I outline some of the other measures in the budget debate on the Appropriation Bill, colleagues would see that we are on target and we are keeping our focus for both continuity and change.

As I end, Mr. Speaker, I just want to crave the indulgence of Honourable Members, as Honourable Members know I always stay in this House and listen to all contributions. I say though that as a consequence of certain very urgent matters, I may have to leave the House, Mr. Speaker, at certain particular points in time. Naturally I would stay and listen to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition throughout, unless an urgent call comes on a particular matter. Please, I asked in advance, as you know me; it is not a mark or a sign of disrespect. I say this in advance. I am obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Leader of the Opposition, you have 45 minutes to make your presentation.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have listened attentively to the presentation on the Estimates made by the Honourable Prime Minister and towards the end of his presentation, he indicated that the public servants and referenced to people overseas are satisfied with Estimates. Well I am not satisfied. You see because what I see before me is simply a rehash of what we had last year for the year 2010. Last year the budget amounted to some \$913 million and was hailed, Mr. Speaker, as the biggest ever and there seemed to be the assumption that we all should make that the bigger the budget the better it is. I pointed out, Mr. Speaker, at that time that it is no sense speaking about the budget being bigger

than the year before unless one looks at [what] actually takes place during the course of the year in relation to the budget. And so this year, Mr. Speaker, despite all the talk last year the budget is now reduced from what was called the record down to \$786 million. A reduction of some \$126 million, the amounts of money that we propose to spend during the course of 2011.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, the budget exercise is a very important one because it tells you what the Government is proposing to do to improve the circumstances of our people and to improve the state of our economy via its programme of spending and of course its revenue intake. And I look, Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister has invited some of our newer members to do, I look first at the snapshot which is a financial summary for 2011 and with the projections for 2012 and 2013, and what do I see? I see a budget..., now this is in summary I will go into some more details a little later, I see a budget on the expenditure side, the recurrent expenditure side including amortisation and sinking funds contributions of \$609 million and I see an estimate of revenue of \$504.7 million. I also see, Mr. Speaker, that when one excludes the amortisation and sinking fund contributions that we have expenditure of \$532 million matched against revenue \$504 million, some \$27 million less revenue than you needed and I think the Prime Minister in his contribution referred to that and therefore a deficit, a current account deficit of some \$27 million.

Mr. Speaker, for many years including the period up to 2005 and including all the years of the NDP administration this country has operated on a current surplus, not deficit, on a current surplus, Mr. Speaker, of the average of 5.32% of Gross Domestic Product. Over the last few years however, we have been operating on the basis of a current deficit and that current deficit today in these Estimates is around \$27 million. But Mr. Speaker, it is one thing to talk about the current deficit when one recognises that that does not include amortisation which we must pay, that is the principal on our loans during the course of the year and it does not include the contributions to our sinking fund and those together for the year 2011 amount to \$77 million. So we have, Mr. Speaker, we have a situation which you have a current deficit of \$27 million on some hundred thousand and those other cash payments which have to be made and when you really look at it, the cash deficit, the amount of money needed to carry out the services that the Government says it would provide during the course of the year, we are short by \$105 million. That is the reality of the Estimates that are presented here to us today that on the current account and bearing in mind amortisation and sinking fund it is short by \$105 million.

Last year it was \$108 million, the deficit, we spoke about it then; I will speak about it again today, Mr. Speaker. I listened very carefully to the presentation of the Prime Minister and I will come back to this reality in a couple of minutes, but the fact remains that when one looks at the snapshot as the Prime Minister calls it, with the financial summary we are once going to operate on the basis of a current deficit and a cash deficit on the current side of our budget and that money has to be made up somewhere or alternatively we spend less.

On the capital side of the budget, Mr. Speaker, we also have a very significant reduction and the Prime Minister gives some of the reasons. A very significant reduction in the capital budget and that has gone from \$303 million down to \$176 million. That is about a 42% decline on the capital budget as compared with 2010 and we have to look, Mr. Speaker, at both of those factors when one considers that the presentations that has been made now that we see here in this document is aimed at stimulating economic growth and development in our country

for 2011 and beyond. But we are starting off with a much smaller capital budget and we are starting off with \$105 million deficit on the current account and then we expect that we are going to get significant economic growth after having two consecutive years of negative growth in the economy of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. That is the snapshot that I see.

Mr. Speaker, let us look at some of the details. Mr. Speaker, I look at the expenditure, the major categories of the current expenditure all of which are important and we have wages and salaries, Mr. Speaker, in 2010 they were estimated at \$237 million and for 2011, \$243 million, that is about a \$6 million increase or 2.5%. Pensions and NIS contributions have gone from \$39.2 million proposed for 2010 to \$46 million for 2011. Other transfers from \$106 million in 2010 to \$113 or so million proposed for 2011. Interest payments are projected to decline from \$61.8 million in 2010 to \$53.5 million in 2011 and goods and services to decline by about \$2.6 million during 2011 as compared with the amount approved for 2010. Then we have amortisation was estimated at \$75.2 million in 2010 and is projected to decline in 2011 by about \$4 million down to \$71.7 million.

Mr. Speaker, when one looks at the total, in 2010 he was speaking about \$610 million for recurrent expenditure and in 2011, \$609.8 million, a mere \$300,000 difference for these two financial years. So not a great deal has changed, Mr. Speaker, in relation to this, but there are some areas which are of significance. Some of them have already been mentioned by the Prime Minister and some I will like to mention myself.

Mr. Speaker, wages and salaries; wages and salaries as I have indicated earlier are expected to increase from \$237 to \$243, it was about 2.5% increase. This 2.5% increase would normally expect to cover increments for public servants or civil servants I should say and in addition, there are supposed to be a 3% increase for public servants based on the agreement that now stands, but we only [have] a provision for 2.5% which is to cover the increments as well as the 3% increase for public servants. The Prime Minister in his presentation mentioned, therefore, that he may have to wait until later in the year to deal with the 3% for the public service. The same thing he had to do last year by the sum that was owing to public servants and to stagger the payments. What I am saying here is whether you are paying it late in the year or early in the year, provision that is made is just about 2.5% and if you look at it, you need something between 4 and 5% increase to cover both the increments, new additional staff and the wage increase or salary increase that is due in accordance with the agreement.

So the provision that is here is insufficient and I assume that it is going to be some need therefore during the course of 2011 for special warrants to cover the funds owed as per the agreement to the public servants. What it means is that the expenditure figures will have to go up in this category of expenditure which we now see as \$243 million.

Then we come, Mr. Speaker, to the pensions and NIS payments. And here you have quite a significant increase from \$39.2 million to \$46 million, 17.3% increase, Mr. Speaker. What does all these means? The Prime Minister has indicated that retirement benefits will take up \$37 million and NIS contributions \$9 million that is how we get the \$46 million and he has made the case that the retirement benefits are increasing at a rapid rate and therefore it is a matter that will need very serious consideration as we go down the road in terms of time. And he anticipates from his presentation that there will become a point in time when the pension will even be

higher than the salaries that those persons originally had when they occupied their posts in the civil service. That is likely to be true, but I also know, Mr. Speaker, that given some of the difficulties of the NIS Services now has because of its loss of income, investment income because of British American, I also know that National Insurance Services will be under some pressure and therefore that institution will of necessity have to review its rates and I expect that during the course of this year that we can have the contribution rates both for employer and worker increased. This is going to bring some additional pressure on the public finances over and above the increase in the retirement benefits that are referred to by the Prime Minister. This is a very serious matter and it deserves very serious attention and I agree with the Prime Minister on that.

I want to say this though; it is very often in the politics of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, indeed even in this Parliament one finds that political decisions are taken which mitigate against the very objectives that are now being discussed, the objectives of containing the rate of growth in the retirement benefits. Many years ago, during the NDP administration and even earlier this was identified as an issue and a decision was taken, Mr. Speaker, a decision was taken that people entering the public service from 1983 onwards would only get NIS, 1993, would only get NIS that was to address the same issue that the Prime Minister raised in his presentation. So that the retirement benefits component of the payment for pension and NIS you would not come to the stage ever once this process was carried through to its logical conclusion even now and beyond now, because you would only be paying those persons who came in after those years their NIS and not a civil service pension.

Then you had what everybody refers to, to greedy bill, and pressures in this Parliament and that decision was reversed and people from 1993 and onwards were given back their pensions that was nice and dandy at that time for certain people, but today it brings us back to reality that this issue now has to be addressed as a matter of urgency. We were well on the way at that time, now the financial reality is with us and a decision has to be made. Those who gloated at the time will have to make and pay a big part in making a decision on that matter. It is a day that will haunt us soon and the Prime Minister expects that. I think that is why this morning he raised the matter in the way that he raised it. But I am saying it has a history and if the decision that had been taken had been maintained, we would not be raising this issue here in 2011.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: [Inaudible.]

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: you did not hear what I have said.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Obviously course I hear you.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: I say that was the political reality at the time and those who gloated about it now has to deal with it.

Mr. Speaker, I noticed also, Mr. Speaker, when one continues to look at the categories of expenditure, I noticed other transfers have again gone up with some reasons for advance for the increase in other transfers and I believe that BRAGSA and the Tourism Authority and some other institutions and so on, yes, like the Community College will get some funding via the transfer route, but it is big expenditure after wages and

salaries, it is the largest component of the recurrent expenditure at \$113 million or \$114 million for the year 2011.

Mr. Speaker, international institutions, regional institutions and even our own national institutions, tend to accept the fact now or the guide I should say that wages and salaries should be about 50 to 51% of recurrent expenditure. Under transfers, we now have a lot of wages and salaries, you have salaries for BRAGSA too, salaries for the Tourism Authority which fall under this category. So in reality when we begin to look back and so is the case with some of our capital projects, when we really do the calculations Mr. Speaker, we will find that wages and salaries are now going far beyond 50 or 51% and beginning to approach say around 58% of recurrent expenditure, so, more and more what is left for other activities are being squeezed. Rough calculation shows, Mr. Speaker, that wages and salaries, pension and NIS and transfers, interest payments on our debts now approach 80% of every dollar of revenue that we collect. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, that means that we only have \$0.20 in every dollar of revenue to carry out all the other functions of Government.

It is a very sobering thought, Mr. Speaker, very sobering and sometimes we make adjustments to accommodate that reality and the only category of recurrent expenditure that has been reduced every year for the last three years is the category for goods and services. Every year for the last three years, so part of the pressure to deal with the payments which are mandatory you see a reflection in our inability to provide all the goods and services needed by the various organs of Government. That is why we have trouble with things like medicine for the hospital, because we have these payments that are mandatory including the payments on the debt, Mr. Speaker. Our payments on wages and salaries and other transfers which we must meet and when you do not have all these monies and you have a deficit, something has to give, something has to give, Mr. Speaker. And I want to continue in that regard and on that issue, because when you have those pressures, you come to a situation where you cannot meet other expenditures that are very critical and one way it is reflected in our public debt is under the heading of payables and to a greater extent, that reflects debt owing to our private sector in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and to the extent that the private sector is owed to that extent, their investment and their confidence to expand their businesses is affected.

So while we are talking about economic growth and development, the way we handle our current fiscal affairs has its impact on the very targets we wish to set for growth in development [applause]. It is a very, very serious issue, Mr. Speaker, a very, very serious issue indeed. So you cut goods and services because you have pressure. You do not pay for other goods and services which we get from the private sector, which brings pressure on their businesses. So they find themselves with probably high overdrafts, which carry higher interest rates, they probably lay off some of their workers, they try to reduce some of their margins and all of these are a reflection of the deficit financing that we are doing. You find yourself also in a position where you cannot make any counterpart contribution to your capital projects and that is how it goes and there is a multiplier effect and our whole economy is negatively affected, despite the effort being made with the capital programme.

Mr. Speaker, I look now at the interest payments and there is something that I would have to go into much greater details when we actually have the debate on the Appropriation Bill. I see a reduction in the interest payments proposed for 2011 of some \$8.3 million, down from \$61.5 million approved for 2010 to \$53.5 million

for 2011. On the face of that I will say that is a good thing and I am waiting to hear the explanation that is given when we have the debate on the Appropriation Bill with respect to that. I am waiting to hear it.

I have looked at the public debt, Mr. Speaker, and I have noted that part of the reason for the reduction in these interest payments has to do with the policy based loan from the CDB, because I notice certain debts have been removed from these schedules and I know it was the intention when dealing with the National Commercial Bank, it was the intention to reduce or retire some of those debts and overdrafts by the CDB loan and I suspect this would have some impact or some parts of the impact that we see in the reduction of the interest payment. Because a lot of those things like the overdraft and some of the loans the NCB had were at higher interest rates and having the CDB loan at 4% allows for some reduction in the rates of interest for those loans that have been replaced or repaid with CDB funds.

Mr. Speaker and perhaps the Prime Minister can address that when he speaks, those payments were made after September 30th and the debt schedule that we have in these Estimates ends at September 30th. Settlement of the NCB matter was not September 30th; it was post that and any payments made in respect to those debts would have been made after September 30th. So I see the schedule and the number of loans and so on reduced, so the internal debt is smaller, but I see no corresponding matching figure for the policy based loan in the external debt. But I leave that for the Prime Minister to deal with.

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

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: I ain't start yet [laughter]. Well, Mr. Speaker, I will have to get more than 4 hours next Tuesday. Mr. Speaker, several years have passed and I have not burnt and this time I am not burning. Something else going burn.

Mr. Speaker, if I could look quickly in the light of what the Speaker has just advised, I want to say this that all the OECS countries except Antigua were in surplus in their current budget. St. Vincent and the Grenadines has now joined Antigua with deficits on their current account. Let me look briefly at the capital budget, Mr. Speaker. You have seen that the budget had been reduced; the capital by a very significant figure and some reasons would [be] advanced with [for] the reduction. You have reductions in everyone except education. Public order and safety, the general public service first has been reduced by \$5.9 million, public order and safety has reduced by \$22.9 million, economic affairs has been reduced by \$85.9 million and I will come back to that. Housing and community amenities reduced by \$11.3 million and environmental protection is small it is only reduced by point 4 of a million. Health has been reduced by about \$5.5 million; recreation and culture has had a small reduction, it was not larger anyway, it was about point 7 of a million. Education is up by \$7.1 million and social projects okay that is reduced by a relatively small amount.

Mr. Speaker, I want to look at this capital budget, the expenditure proposed in the capital budget. We are talking of a situation in which our economy has not grown for two consecutive years. We are presenting Estimates which we expect will lead the economic growth in 2011. But because of fiscal and other reasons we have to cut the capital budget and cut it significantly. How do we expect that to impact on economic growth? Well, a larger deficit is also a larger debt which they are trying to avoid. But Mr. Speaker, another matter is

making up your mind which I want you know, it is to make up your mind what you want for the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister was correct when he said that economic affairs that category of capital expenditure is the one that deals with the productive sectors of the economy. Economic affairs deal with the productive sectors of the economy of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and I agree with him, but economic affairs were cut from \$172 million in 2010 to \$87 million in 2011, the area that deals with the productive sectors of our economy in terms of capital expenditure, why the biggest and largest cut? When you have a target of coming back to economic growth in 2011, it does not make any sense to me. And it is a serious issue which needs consideration and an answer and I am sure that during the debate on the appropriation Bill we will go into this in much greater detail. But to me it is not consistent with the general thrust that one would expect if you are looking for economic growth in 2011 in an environment that already difficult, in an environment where the private sector itself is in difficulties. Where the general world economic situation though improving is not improving at the rate we are expecting it or wanted it to improve, where we have arrears to our own private sector that are substantial, where our own private sector and individuals have suffered under the problems arising with the British American failure.

So there is a double whammy here, Mr. Speaker. A triple or quadruple that is there and all those are factors, Mr. Speaker, that impact on investment and investment decisions and they will impact on how our economy will grow. That is what it does and that is why I keep saying that when you look at the Estimates they have to be looked at within the context that we are projecting economic growth and development for our people, for our economy and I find a lot of what is here is inconsistent with the achievement of that goal and made worse by the international environment. The Prime Minister mentioned this morning oil prices going back up again. All those will have their impact and I am looking forward, Mr. Speaker, to seeing in the budget what is proposed. Some may not include what we see here in the Estimates. What is being proposed to put the private sector on a better footing, what is being proposed to deal with those persons and individuals who have lost their entire gratuity having invested in British American and who now find it difficult to live and let me say so, I am not blaming the Government of St. Vincent to this you know, I am saying that that has happened, it has had an impact on our economy, we have accepted proposals which were done regionally, they are not working. [Interjection] I did not hear you [interjection] no I did not hear him.

I am saying that that causes us to have another look, because the mechanism proposed, and the Prime Minister said it this morning. I am looking forward for his presentation on the budget, the mechanism of new code that was proposed to deal with the British American; with the battle in this country. It is not working out in the way and it may have to go to plan B. It is a very, very serious issue. Not only in human terms, but seriously in the economic terms, in terms of its impact on investment and otherwise and these are issues you know which we cannot get away from.

I know of one individual, a friend of mind in the neighbouring country who is now in the mental asylum, because they lost their entire gratuity after over 30 years of teaching. There is a significant human impact and there is a grave economic impact, grave even for our National Insurance Service not just individuals. Grave for some of our credit unions and I am looking forward to what this plan B is supposed to be in this regard.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I would ask you to wind up now, Honourable Member.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Yes Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I really regret that I have to wind up, but I am going to deal with a lot of these when we deal with the budget next week including, Mr. Speaker, including, Mr. Speaker, how meaningful is the finance and the revenue figures we have here in terms of collection.

You know, sometimes you have to beat the kettle until you mash it up and when it comes to some of the projections here, I have a lot of difficulty with them and these Estimates as they are to me do not achieve the goal, the desired goal to make a meaningful contribution to improve economic growth for the year 2011. I am much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Any further debate, Honourable Senator Frederick.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I believe that this is a useful time for us to take the luncheon adjournment and the Honourable Senator can have her bite, her inaugural bite after lunch. It is her maiden speech. We normally take about two hours for lunch, Mr. Speaker, so we could be back at...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Members in the stranger's gallery please deal with decorum.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: So we can be back at 2:15 p.m. I just want to say, Mr. Speaker, that in earlier times the Honourable Leader of the Opposition would have had a little more time, but during the period of the NDP regime they had changed the rules and appreciate that..., if you were here you would have had more time, but the point is this, it is a reminder that, Mr. Speaker, that as we go on the luncheon interval, in this business there are no prizes for coming second. It is not a beauty show in which you Ms. Collegiality, Ms. Congeniality, Ms. Photogenic, a prize for second runner up and first runner up. There is only one prize, is a first prize, so that is how it is.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Honourable House do stand suspended...

HONOURABLE VYNETTE FREDERICK: Mr. Speaker, certainly I just want to indicate to...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: That we are all here.

HONOURABLE VYNETTE FREDERICK: Not only are we all here, but to my learned senior in the other forum through the Prime Minister that I will trust that on his return he would hear that I have intended initially to congratulate him and to congratulate him on being so welcoming to the new Members on both sides I take the point to be and to say how appreciative I was, but he has delayed me by the luncheon interval. So that I trust he will be back to hear those words from this side.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, one of the things about me why I am who I am, I listen well. I want to thank the Honourable Senator for her kind words and I wish her well in every respect even in respect of coming second in West St. George.

I beg to move, Mr. Speaker, this Honourable House do stand suspended until 2:30 p.m. Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Central Kingstown is indicating something. I do not know what it is. Before I put the question what is it?

HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLAIRE LEACOCK: Not to delay you, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to attend a funeral well around that time, but to indicate to you I want to speak on the budget, so probably I will get back here for 4:30 p.m.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Not the budget, the Estimates, so I think you will be back here on time. Because several persons also indicated that they will want to speak.

HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLAIRE LEACOCK: Mr. Speaker, I intend to be here until midnight, if need be so we can ..., I have no problem at all. No, we will finish by midnight tonight. I assure you.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, this is an excellent time for my own personal convenience so this Honourable House stands suspended until 2:30 p.m.

Question put and agreed to.
House suspended at 12:15 p.m (Luncheon)
Until 2:30 p.m.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: When we took the suspension for lunch, the Honourable Senator Frederick we had recognised her to speak next. So I am going to call on her. Just to remind her that she has 45 minutes in which to make her presentation. I would advise you as to when you can begin. Let me get my device reset. Okay Senator. You can begin now.

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK: Very, well. I am much obliged. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, good afternoon. Today, as we look at the Estimates, the Estimates of Revenues and Expenditures for the year 2011. Let me first indicate, as an aside, but an important aside, that quite apart from my professional capacity, my functioning as an attorney on the outside, in this Honourable House I look forward to learning and to representing the interest of the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The people that I am actually responsible to in my capacity here as an Honourable Member. And let me as an aside say further that I look forward to contributing to these and subsequent debates in the area of information technology, telecommunications and culture. I say that to underscore the areas where I will focus with regards to these Estimates debates.

That having been said, we look at the Estimates for 2011 but we do not look at them in isolation. We must have regard for what pertained in 2010. If what was intended to be done in 2010 by those Estimates actually took

place and to what extent things were done. And if the money that was intended to be allocated to various Ministries and to various capital projects actually were used in the interest of the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the programmes that every Ministry is to undertake on their behalf. So it is instructive to have regard for what would have been said in the debates in the previous year and indeed what was said by the Honourable Prime Minister today and the Honourable Leader of the Opposition today. What I have noted is that in looking at the snapshot, as it was described earlier, one gets a sense of what is given priority by the government based on how funds are allocated. You can tell what is prioritized as being important and that is instructive, indeed, to the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines who depend on hearing what will happen for them with regard to these Estimates and of course the more substantive budget debate to come. But these Estimates do not exist in a vacuum; they are to reflect what is actually happening in the machinery of government across all ministries and across all sectors.

In 2010 the Honourable Prime Minister, the Honourable Minister of Finance made several things clear to the House and its Honourable Members; he reiterated in his presentation then that things were tight, he said it several times. He indicated that in spite of the tightness he was going forward with seven projects which he detailed, and which I am sure we will hear about in the more substantive budget debate. But he then explained that the expenditure was necessary in spite of the tight climate in which the government was expected to perform. And we noted where the significance was placed, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, the Ministry of National Mobilization, the Ministry of Education was highlighted, agriculture, banana was highlighted, oxygen, the Ministry of Health was highlighted, so you got a sense of where the priorities are for government; quite rightly.

We heard not as an aside, but with not with the same level of... I do not want to say fura; [Inaudible] we heard about tourism and in education we heard about the thrust to improve education through ICT, which is intended to benefit from an injection of \$6.5 million. And it is important here to indicate that while this is an ICT project, Information, Communication Technology project, it is happening across a sector. It is happening; it is being implemented by the Ministry of Education. And it is the very positioning of this particular allocation in the Estimates which makes me confident to say that the Information Technology Department, in the then Ministry of Telecommunications and IT ought to have been significantly recognized as being important. As a matter of fact, it was so recognized. IT impacts seven ministries in a very open and obvious way. But quite frankly, across St. Vincent and the Grenadines information technology is extremely important. It forms a base from which we, those who are charged with governance in St. Vincent and the Grenadines can push economic development for the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines using the youth as the engine to drive the IT sector.

All right, 2010 we heard about \$6.5 million to improve education to IT. We heard about it again in these Estimates. We also heard about the government that is the public service, the civil service, the government's PBX moving to voice over IP technology. He said that there was \$1 million for that. The fact that that is the intention indicates some sort of appreciation, how small, I cannot say, but some appreciation for the significance of technology. Indeed, technology is one of the ways out for St. Vincent and the Grenadines. So in looking at these Estimates, it is important to understand what is going to be spent on technology, and indeed, I will again, speak to what is going to spent on culture, because if I am to have regard for technology,

telecommunications and culture. But in looking to technology, we must have regard for first of all, the financial summary. And here I must unreservedly underscore one of the most important statements made by the Leader of the Opposition in responding to Estimates debate today, I actually wrote it, 'why would you cut spending in economic affairs when the productive sectors of the country needs support and you want to grow?' That was the question that was being asked. And if you look at what actually sits within economic affairs, and this is Roman numeral 18 (XVIII). Economic affairs includes general admin, public works, Ministry of Telecommunications, Project Management, Science and Technology and ITSD. So the first thing that is disheartening, is that there will not be as much money put towards economic affairs this year and that means undoubtedly that telecommunications, science and technology and the ITSD in some way or shape or form will be affected negatively.

All right. Now, IT is mentioned across sectors and it is cross-sectoral and enabling. It is sort of a foundation that is necessary for growth to happen everywhere in government. The Prime Minister in speaking to the Estimates this morning said that he made a saving by taking on the responsibility for IT and telecommunications. He made a saving, and on my calculation, whereas \$5.2 million would have been allocated for that Ministry on the recurrent expenditure last estimate, this year \$3.6 million giving us a saving according to the Minister of Finance and Prime Minister of \$1.67 million. Well if there exists such a saving let me here request that it be pumped right back into the IT sector. Let me ask that it go right back into financing and buttressing information technology which now sits in the Prime Minister's Office.

In looking at these Estimates, I could not help but observe that across the board it appears to me that the monies allocated to training have been cut except in the Prime Minister's Office. And I am suggesting then that the \$20,000.00 increase on training for the Office of the Prime Minister will perhaps be used to ensure that not only the staff there from top to bottom becomes more IT savvy; but that an entire plan for educating the Prime Minister's Office on the significance and importance of IT and telecommunications ought to be undertaken almost immediately. It is that important.

It is worrying to me that the allocation for training for the Ministry of Education where IT is supposed to play a very significant role, as a matter of fact, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Education started the school year by stating that exciting times were ahead in IT and education. It is not exciting to indicate however, that some \$36,000.00 seems to have been removed from the training budget, and that should be the allocation for training, it is \$36,000.00 less in a year when exciting times mean more action for the Ministry of Education where IT is concerned. These are of course my observations. Let me cut in and say, that the Ministry of Culture, would find itself with a 50% cut in its allocation for training as well. And I am not certain whether the disregard or the less than enthusiastic regard for the training and allocation is because substantively there appears to be no real plan of action for how to proceed in these ministries but that is a more substantive debate that will come in just under a week. That is for that debate.

If we look at the money side, the projects under IT, the capital projects, again the capital projects that involve IT and I spread myself a little bit wide on that and I encroach on again the Ministry of Education, because this is the nature of information technology. It is not a statistic sort of... it meanders, it moves, it is alive. It is not a stand-alone, turn the page of a book kind of thing. IT is about sharing information and knowledge to anyone,

anywhere, anytime and in that very context the approach towards how you treat IT cannot be in formal sort of by the book sense. You have to be willing to think outside of the box and to appreciate how fluid technology is. And so I see that there are three projects that ought to have ended. As a matter of fact, two of them speak to the Centre of Excellence which we are told is finished and paying monies there. But the development of communication infrastructure to establish a communication backbone of the public service is now projected to be completed by 2015 and to cost \$3.6 million dollars, last estimate it was projected to cost \$1.1 million and to be completed this year. So we see it reappearing here under different financing, but it is still moving forward.

Let me say without hesitation that the establishment of a communication backboard for the public service is very commendable. It is absolutely necessary and there is no politicking around that, it makes sense to do. The fact of the matter is, however, that establishing a communication backbone for the public service when the communication backbone for the country is inadequate to be competitive internationally says something about what government believes IT can do for the country. And indeed what government seems to believe that IT cannot do for the country. And so without straying from looking at the money issues in these estimates, I will say that the fact that these estimates do not go far enough to address looking at the creation and the beefing up and the overwhelming support that is needed for a national backbone. That the private sector is currently trying to do and any government that is interested in being competitive and offering extended employment for its people would not say that it is solely the function of the private sector to offer this service. If the private sector capacity could offer a two megabytes bandwidth when the world governments are responding with putting in infrastructure to ensure that its IT businesses can offer 100 megabytes bandwidth. Surely it is nearsighted to believe that information technology in St. Vincent and the Grenadines should rests only with two providers limping along and offering two megabytes at a time when we say we want economic growth.

Indeed, when things are beyond the competence of those who are not charged with the responsibility for them, it is unfortunate, it is lamentable indeed. So, we look forward to the voice over IP project coming off the ground and we look forward to the installation of application systems for the departments and agencies in government, something that is to happen by 2015.

Now, I daresay that, the fact that these projects are sitting on the books with a projected end date of 2015 while information technology is given a budget on the recurrent side of just over, let me find the figure, just over \$3.5 million. This says to me that these Estimates do not go far enough in allocating funds to departments and to ministries where there is with investment the opportunity for serious progress and economic development to take place. While, I am appreciative of the fact that there is some effort and while my own knowledge is that since 2001 effort has been made, it is unfortunate to see that as we start 2011, in these Estimates there is no real provision made for improving access and bandwidth issues, that those in the IT community will lament themselves. Perhaps, information technology is too new for all of us. Perhaps that is the problem. However, when we look at where the government intends to spend its money, we see that failing to take into account the significant outcome that a proper investment in IT can bring to the country we are left with a department of the Office of the Prime Minister, three projects he described them as and no real connectivity. But I will go in more detail, more substantive detail when we speak further next week.

Now, on areas of culture again, I daresay, that culture is one of those tangible, intangibles. Mr. Speaker, certainly, if we were to ask what is the culture of the country, we will get 106,000 different answers with some sort of similarity but no real substantive answer to which everyone would agree. And when we look in the Estimates we see that there is \$1.4 million to be allocated to the Department of Culture and of course we have to take into consideration the fact that the Carnival Development Committee, which I refer to as an implementer of the cultural product of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, expects to get I believe some \$450,000.00 in grants and contributions. It is lamentable that the Estimates as approved last year would have seen them getting \$550,000.00 and as a matter of fact, ... by my reading here, it is \$550,000.00 I do not know if my document is incorrect, I have seen several iraters so, I will be guided. However, the National Cultural Foundation again which is supposed to be an implementer of the cultural product of the country is getting \$25,000.00. If you ask the general average person what is the NCF, I am certain he will have a hard time telling you. And surely the allocation towards the NCF with that being the allocation, it is no small wonder. Although, in culture their overall allocation has improved from just over \$1.3 million to \$1.4 million. The projection appears to say that less would be spent on cultural activities, so that the Ministry of Culture appears to be going to take a hit this year in the pocket in the area where it ought to be most supported; because in 2008 it got just over \$424,000.00 on the current side for cultural activities; in 2009, the actual monies spent was \$395,000.00, I believe. The approved budget fell in 2010 to \$325,000.00 and there it stayed in 2011, at \$325,000.00. But there seems to me to be an absence of willingness to appreciate that culture, tourism and trade are connected. And I would get into that more substantively again when we debate next week. But the fact of the allocations, the reality of what they are suggest to me almost a slighting of areas where there should be more substantial support given. Because the potential for economic growth exists not just for the IT sector but also in areas like culture, especially when you connect culture to tourism and you involve yourself in the activities that trade would have in common with tourism and culture. So we can get into whether these policies are ever being thought about. But we will do that on another occasion.

Again, I listened with intent to all that was said today, in presenting these Estimates. I listened with intent to the Minister of Finance and Prime Minister. I also listened to the Leader of the Opposition who responded and when all is said and done, when we look at the IT sector, when we look at where it now sits; when we look at the fact that the implementing ministry for a massive IT project is the Ministry of Education. When we look to the fact, that in culture there is one project that quite importantly actually speaks to the Garifuna people, to rebuild Garifuna culture and as a matter of fact, the competition date is supposed to be this year, so I look forward to seeing what is happening there, and to promote cultural industries. We have an allocation of \$40,000.00 going towards that where project is expected to actually cost \$194,000.00. When we look at what is actually projected to happen in these estimates, in the areas for which I have responsibility on this side of the House; it is important to indicate to those who are listening to the general public, to those who in information technology in this country, must feel like they are fighting and waging a battle almost on their own, it is important to say to them, having regard to where IT should be in the consciousness of this government, in how it executes and spends its money. And having regard for how significant a contributor to our economy culture could be.

It is unfortunate that I must end today by saying not enough is being done to offer an incisive and coherent approach to how these ministries and sectors are supported financially to secure an outcome in straight dollars

and cents that could be measured in dollars and cents and in the wellbeing and happiness and capacity building of the people who participate in culture and IT. It is unfortunate that I have to say that not enough is being done to allocate to these areas and to these ministries actually monies that would kick start the IT sector and kick start culture in a very tangible way. Mr. Speaker, with that I am obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Any further debate? Honourable Minister of Works. Are you debating or are you sitting. I thought you were bowing.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: I was not bowing to go back to my seat, I was indicating that I was standing.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay, all right. Honourable Member, you know you have 45 minutes to debate the motion

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, I came from inside, and decided that I would not sit I would continue to stand so I would be recognized. I rise to make my contribution to the debate on the Estimates that are before us and I have listened both the Leader of the Opposition and the Honourable Senator Vynnette Fredrick on the positions on the Estimates. I also listened to the Minister of Finance in presenting the Estimates. Mr. Speaker, I thought of rising while the Honourable Senator was speaking. But I just thought I would offer as I do my presentation, that I think it is common practice in the Parliament, in the House that if you are referring to anything in the Estimates, you should give page and number so that other members of the House can follow what you are saying. But I suppose on the first day in Parliament, one is allowed to get away with it, but for future debates, we shall rise to ask for guidance as to what she speaks. Because I specifically recall her saying that the IT vote or one vote in telecoms was cut by half. But it was difficult for me to follow that to see if she was accurate, because I did not know to what specific vote she was referring. So just for advice, and assistance please if you can guide us along with your discourse so we can agree or disagree with you. I was wondering if I could have the podium, Brother.

Mr. Speaker, these Estimates are coming at a time, when we are hoping that we are getting over the international and financial crisis. And it is coming at a time when at the end of a five year period when we were coming on to elections and many things had to be done, and we wanted to get things done, it is only a silly administration that would be approaching an election year and not make the adjustments accordingly in your budget. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition suffered the fate in 2001 when he said that he will never deliver what is called an election budget. Well, there are some persons who learn the hard way and some persons who know exactly what to do. And the cry from the Leader of the Opposition that budget has been reduced substantially by \$300 million. And he uses that figure... no, from \$900, to \$609, yes close to \$300 million, it is significant, close enough to \$300. If we want to go to the arithmetic and divide and subtract and say well I am short by \$300,000.00 or \$400,000.00 fine. I stand corrected. But the point you were making is that, the deficit on the Estimates is high and this is the point I want to get to. That it is \$105 million in deficit as you say, we say it is \$27 million on the current account. That is true. You said so too. But you went further, as you do, and when you speak of the Prime Minister presentation on the Estimates being a rehash, I could sit in

my seat, Mr. Speaker, and tell you then next few words that the Leader of the Opposition would use in describing the budget in his opening sentences.

In fact, I can write his speech for him. But you want bigger figures in the budget. But my understanding in preparing a budget is that in a budget, you are guided by your income. In all the years I have practiced accounting, and in all the years I have done budgets for different businesses in this country, including my own businesses to take to the bank for proposals, and as a former banker myself, a very experienced and thorough one too, if I may say it myself, you are guided in your budget preparation by the amount of income you have. So therefore, if the Leader of the Opposition wants to have more monies spent, then he has to expect a larger deficit. So basically what he is saying to the Minister of Finance is give us a budget with \$300 million deficit and let us stimulate the economy. He saying that the budget that we are presenting is not a stimulant to the economy. [Interjection] Well, we have been wrecked already by other people, but under the Honourable Ralph Gonsalves as Prime Minister, you will not find the economy being wrecked. But every year we hear the same song coming from the Leader of the Opposition about this large deficit...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Let, me just stop you there, the Honourable Senator Frederick got away with it, but we need to get it right, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition. Honourable Senator you referred to the Honourable Ralph Gonsalves, Prime Minister a while ago, let us say the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, say Honourable Leader of the Opposition and not just Leader of the Opposition.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Please forgive me, Mr. Speaker,...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I did not stop her, because I did not want to unbalance her on a number of areas.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition would like to see us with a larger deficit, and then he goes on to say, that we have now joined Antigua in having the only deficit budget in the OECS. The others therefore, if his information is correct, and I am accepting it as being correct, I doubt it very much, but he is more read, wider read and more learned in these matters than I am, and I will accept his statement on it. But if that is so maybe it is worth the while to have a deficit budget in these hard economic times, because all of the islands including St. Vincent suffer from negative growth. But we are the least negative, that is the substantial point I want to make. We are the least negative growth. So our creative way of presenting this budget seem to be... despite the fact that it is deficit budget seems to be working in the interest of the development of the country and the growth and enrichment of all people. So to come here annually in the estimates and rehash the same trash, Mr. Speaker, I do not think that is unparliamentary, if it is please guide me...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: It borders on.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Borders on, I love to be borderline, Mr. Speaker. I used to have an Art teacher in school, whose name was Mr. Roberts, and every time you misbehave he would say, "Francis", you know he was a Yankee, he says "Francis, you are walking on the edge of a volcano." So the next time you

misbehave he would tell you the same thing, “Francis, you are walking on the edge of a volcano.” And the third time you misbehave he would say “And Francis you have now stepped into the volcano”. So Mr. Speaker, I like to be on the borderline, but not to fall. By now I have learnt how not to step into the volcano.

So Mr. Speaker, in this hard international, global world that we live it is not to follow the Jones. We have been able in this country up until the end of the December including bonus and back pay to pay our public servants. We have not borrowed money from anybody to pay our public servants, despite all the hard economic times that are out there. So what does the Honourable Leader of the Opposition want us to do; follow the other islands who have to borrow money every month and have a surplus budget to pay our public servants. Mr. Speaker, I personally encouraged the Prime Minister years ago to run a deficit budget because, Mr. Speaker, every year you present a budget when the actual figures come out it is nothing close to the deficit that you put in the beginning.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Senator Francis, Minister of Transport and Works, the Honourable Leader is rising on a point of order, but I would have to ask him please to state his point of order.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Misrepresentation, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a very simple, very simple comment...

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, it is a point of order or a simple comment? Does he want elucidation on something I have said? I am not prepared to give way to him on the matter.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: No, no. Just a minute.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: He is misrepresenting what I have said.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Is there a point of order, Mr. Speaker?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Yes, he said a point of order. As a matter of fact, I would prefer, I would ask when you are moving on a point of order, you state exactly the point of order, relative to the section and so on in the Standing Order. But I know that would hold us up a couple of minutes, but I am just saying that in the future, so I would allow you just to go ahead with your...

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: I want to correct the statement; I simply said that we have joined Antigua in relation to a recurrent deficit. Not a deficit. An overall deficit is a completely different kettle of fish, and maybe if the Honourable Member understood that he better be able to understand my comment.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay. Thank you. Honourable Member.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition spent as much time describing the recurrent deficit as he spent describing the total deficit of this. And his reference to that was

made after he had spent a considerable time describing the total deficit of the budget being \$105 million. It did not come at a time... Mr. Speaker, I am not giving way. He did not come at the time when he was discussing...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Member why are you standing?

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Way down in my notes, he said we have joined Antigua and it is way down after, when the Prime Minister told him that he had burn. And he said he does not burn, something else would burn. And then he said, St. Vincent...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable, just a minute, just a minute.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, may I, let me just finish this one. He said, St. Vincent join Antigua in deficit budget, all other countries, surplus.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Now, you are rising on a point of order. You are stating the point of order as it is, misrepresentation. Do you want to state exactly what you have said earlier?

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Mr. Speaker, the \$105 million is a cash deficit on the recurrent budget, it has nothing to do with the any statements on the overall budget deficit.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: All right.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: There is a recurrent deficit of \$27 million and then you have to add in the amortization payments and the sinking fund, which is another seventy something million, that brings us to \$105 million. All of that is in the recurrent budget. It has nothing to do with an overall budget. And the Minister must understand these things before he cast his aspersions. He does not have a clue of what he is speaking.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Minister could you just move on having given that explanation.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, if I am to give way again for the Leader of the Opposition to explain what he said before Mr. Speaker, I will wrap up early.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: No well... May I suggest then that you move on in your debate.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Okay, no, but I have not, Mr. Speaker...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: And you are not really... it is not a question of giving way, he is moving on a point of order and according to the rules you have to relent.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: I am not. But I am not finished yet, Mr. Speaker, with the matter of the deficit budget.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Well go ahead. Well, maybe if you could avoid misquoting the Honourable Member while you discuss that.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, for us to know who is right and who is wrong, we need to recall the Hansard.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I would not get that now.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Okay. So we do not have the time for that this afternoon. He has made notes, I have made notes, other persons have listened in this Parliament, Mr. Speaker, and he cannot be right every time. He did use the term cash deficit of \$105 million. I am referring... [Interjections] Mr. Speaker, the substantial point I am making despite the interruptions by Honourable Leader of the Opposition is this, we have been running he says since 2005 a deficit budget, either on the recurrent or on the cash deficit, whichever way he wants to describe it. And I am saying that that is in the best interest of the development of this country, considering the international financial crisis and the meltdown. That is the substantial point I am making, because we would have been among those who have five and six percent negative growth, we would have been among that lot. And we would have been among the lot who would be borrowing money every single month at very high rates of interest to pay our public servants. And we would have been among those who carry about \$150,000.00; 150%, between 120 to 150% of their gross domestic product. Ours is in the late 70's within the guidelines issued by the international, with the organizations.

We run a deficit budget, Mr. Speaker, by policy and by programme because we are people oriented. How could we in estimates provide an additional \$4 million for public assistance? How could we do it? Mr. Speaker, 6,000 persons thereabouts are on the poor relief list, the public assistance list. Most people in St. Vincent call it poor relief. It used to be that long ago we changed it. Mr. Speaker, these are the reasons why we run a deficit budget. Because as I repeat what is presented as a deficit budget in the beginning comes out to a much reduced deficit or even a surplus at the end of the financial year. He said we had to cut back on goods and services to achieve that at the end of the year, well pot must not tell kettle its bottom is black; because we have been accustomed to this.

I recall under the NDP, Mr. Speaker, and those days the Honourable Leader of the Opposition was the fiscal adviser to the NDP government; where you had to have a surplus in your recurrent budget to help with local projects; they said their counterpart money, they must always have money because they do not want to beg people for money to put into projects. But our implementation rate with our style of governance and our deficit budget has been better than that of the NDP throughout their entire 17 years and our 10 years. So the policy therefore and programmes of the Unity Labour Party and the creative way in which we do our money matters we have been better by far than the NDP.

This is what I have done, Mr. Speaker, things like this; this January persons under 65 years who were receiving \$160.00 per month is now getting \$200.00 per month public assistance, an increase of \$40.00 per month. I paint it up on a board and put it up on Back Street for everybody to see this morning. Those of you who sit in

the Parliament and you did not see it when you are going out this evening it will be there and it is going to be there for the rest of this week, because we may very well come back here tomorrow. And next week we will come back again. So bring the people out this week and I may have another board showing you another policy of the Unity Labour Party Administration. Persons 65 years and over who were getting \$175.00 per month are now receiving \$220.00 a month. Mr. Speaker, when we took office in this country, public assistance was \$50.00 per month. Am I not right Sister Girlyn, Honourable Minister of Education? \$50.00 per month. This administration with a deficit budget, Mr. Speaker, we crossed the century line, and now we have crossed the double century line. We take it from \$50.00 and carried it up to \$100.00; and now we are carrying it over to \$200.00, Mr. Speaker. That is what the people of this country elected people's government for. And we do not mind running a deficit budget for that.

Foster parents, people who take in children to live with them when the children's mother die, foster parents, or when they get abandoned on the street and the Ministry of Social Development looking for somebody to keep them in a home, they take them in. But you see these things do not concern the NDP, they do not concern members of the opposition. Foster parents were receiving \$225.00 per month for a foster child, they are now getting \$275.00 per month, so a woman or a family takes in four, they get four times \$225.00, is not that not how the system works? They got four times \$225.00 before, now they are getting four times \$275.00; so you will multiply \$50.00 additional increase of \$50.00 per month per child that you are taking in. That is what this party and this administration is about. Not to please somebody overseas, that we must carry a surplus budget so that we do not come to beg them for input. You will see in our capital estimates that most of our projects under my ministry, have local contribution. Where do we get it from revenue? Where we get it from, we go and we ask somebody to help us with some extra money somewhere else, and we use our revenue to put the counterpart funds. All my projects have counterpart money in it and I will go through them just now.

Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have left? It is important that I spend some time on this.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: You are only 19 minutes into your debate.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Oh, very good. Students, Mr. Speaker, there were two types of students, one was getting \$80.00 per month and one was getting \$100.00 per month for transport. And I am talking here about students other than those that we help individually. I have three of them now from North Leeward I am giving money now to come to Community College. But the government here \$80.00 month for transport, now getting \$100.00 a month and those who were getting \$100.00 now getting \$120.00; both of them get a \$20.00 increase. Mr. Speaker, this is a cost to the consolidated fund of \$4 million. We are taking it to put into our pockets. We not creating a deficit to enrich ourselves. We are creating a deficit in this country to keep the economy ticking, stimulate the economy and at the same time help the people who cannot help themselves. That is what our programmes and policies are all about, Mr. Speaker.

I listened to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition and the Honourable Senator Vynnette and there seems to be a confusion in the minds of the Opposition as to the role of private sector and public sector. They seem confused. We need to put more money into the estimates to create a larger deficit to be a stimulant to the economy the Honourable Leader of the Opposition says. I think that is what he said, unless he wants to stand

and correct that statement too. The Honourable Senator says that have come out of the Prime Minister's training vote could be put to IT and that the government must compete with Kelly Glass, compete with LIME and compete with Digicel to offer bandwidth. [Interjection] The Honourable Senator says that we must have the government invest in bandwidth. Me nah ask you, I am telling you want she said.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, she is standing on a point of order. Please state your point of order.

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK: A misrepresentation of what was indeed said. A misrepresentation bordering on perhaps a serious misunderstanding of IT in general but I will speak to the misrepresentation. The misrepresentation the suggestion, I have never indicated that thought that the government should compete; indeed I said they should look to work with the stakeholders to increase the bandwidth that is being offered. As a matter of fact, indeed if that is not what was understood then I cannot address that, but that is indeed what the indicator was.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: All right. Honourable Senator, maybe that is probably what you meant. Just sit down for me please. Maybe that is probably what you meant, what you did not say actually, you did not make reference to as such to Digicel, LIME and the others, but maybe within the context of those persons who are doing the broadband business, probably in that manner he has indicated that way. I do not think the statement that what you said... maybe that is what you meant. Maybe that is what you had in mind. So Honourable Member...

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK: Beg your pardon, Mr. Speaker, I am not understanding your ruling on the point of order...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Well I am saying, I am sort of saying that you did not make, what you said as a correction there maybe you had that in mind, it is not a question of him misunderstanding you.

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK: So he is interpreting me to be saying that we should compete, but I am saying specifically...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: No you did not.

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK: ...that I did not expressly state that we should compete at all with the private sector.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: What I am saying in my understanding you obviously did not call the names of the persons, but I think you were making references to the fact that we should compete.

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK: No I did not say in those specific terms at all. I did make reference to the fact that world governments are addressing actually improving bandwidths in some cases to 100 megabytes; and for us to be competitive but again that is a discussion to have... but we will move on, but I specifically did not state competition.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay. Thank you, very much. We will move on. We will get the full statement and look at it at some other point. Honourable Senator.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, I did not intend in my presentation to be lesson 101 for the Honourable Senator. I interpreted what she said, Mr. Speaker, I heard what she said and in my usual style I am very graphic in my presentation. So if she is saying that the government must invest in 100 megabytes of bandwidth then she is saying to me that look Kelly Glass, LIME and Digicel look out government is going to compete with you on bandwidth. That is my logical conclusion, as any sane, single-headed, normal person.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Let us move on.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: But, it is lesson 101 Mr. Speaker, lesson 102 will come later on, next week. Because there seems to be something following on in the ranks of the opposition, because as I said this morning, he starts to present and speaks to the snapshot, and then he says that is all I would say to that but I will come back to it later and he never comes back to it, because he then runs out of time and the Honourable Senator left everything for next week. Well next week is a different story.

Mr. Speaker, the continued objection that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition has to the presentation of the budget by the Honourable Prime Minister and the Unity Labour Party administration. I want to suggest this to the opposition that now that you have a full rank, you have nine persons on the other side, you have named a shadow cabinet with each of your elected member and nominated member on the other side having a portfolio then all you need to do is put yourself together and present an alternative budget to the budget of the Unity Labour Party administration. If you have a full shadow cabinet you have a lot of financial advisors, and economic advisors, come up with your budget. Because you have five years to argue this the same time, you know. Every year for the next five years you inside here saying the same thing, and rehashing the same story, until election call again in 2015; five more years, 60 months. One ain't done yet. One done? Yeah, yeah one done. My math is deteriorating as I get older, on political matters.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to address some matters, that was just the preliminary and just to say the final correction and trust the Honourable Senator will take this one, that I believe that the Honourable Minister of Finance referred to the Telecommunications as a department. I think that is how he described it as and I think that is how it is presented in the Estimates that they are departments under the Ministry of Telecommunications which he is Minister of. Dr. Jerrol Thompson now heads that department and would naturally continue the work that he did so wonderfully well in the last two terms while he was Minister of Telecoms, Science and Technology.

Mr. Speaker, I have a Ministry to which to which I am pleased to have been sent back to, and it is the Ministry of Transport, Works, Urban Renewal, a new portfolio and I had local government in the last administration, coupled with housing and what the Honourable Member for East St. George now heads. What is new is BRAGSA.

BRAGSA is a child created by this Unity Labour Party administration. And what I found remarkable during the election campaign, Mr. Speaker, was nobody wanted Brian George job, everybody was slicing up the political cake and the economic cake but I never heard one soul say that they are going to be the manager of BRAGSA. I heard certain people say, that the Fisheries in Owia is theirs. One woman actually went to the Honourable Prime Minister on the morning after the elections' and said that as she had supported the New Democratic Party they had promised to give her the government supermarket, and now that we have won the elections she still come to beg for it. I give her first prize for boldfacedness. Nobody wanted Brian George job, and I found it strange, so I concluded that BRAGSA would have gone out of the window if the New Democratic Party had won the elections. There would not have been any... nobody wanted the Chairman of BRAGSA, they hit the present chairman so hard before the campaign and during the campaign, I thought one of them would have been glad to take the chairmanship and the General Manager positions on BRAGSA.

BRAGSA, Mr. Speaker, was created by this administration, it was discussed in my first term with the Honourable Prime Minister and the then Minister in the second administration brought it to fruition and it has been handed back to me for me to manage. Mr. Speaker, I will say that BRAGSA is a wonderful creature, or statute, I love the way that that Act is put together and I shall only be very proud and pleased to be manger, to be the Minister with responsibility for BRAGSA. Because if you read that Act you will see how effective the Minister's role is in the functioning of BRAGSA. We get licks for it so we might as well get credit for it when it is done properly.

Mr. Speaker, BRAGSA has been given a recurrent budget this year of \$16.5 million. Last year it was \$19 million. BRAGSA is responsible and taking into consideration what we have discussed before, we have reduced... I recall during the budgetary debate whenever you asked in the discussion, the discussion not the debate about increases the Minister of Finance then who chaired all these sessions said, the Honourable Prime Minister said, well we cannot give you any further increase, we have to try and manage what we have because we have to find some extra money to make sure that the poor people in this country get looked after. And this is why you will see reductions in lots of areas, Mr. Speaker.

BRAGSA now has \$16.5 and if you look to my ministry in the Recurrent Estimates run from after agriculture, page 403, in the estimates, you will find mission statements, the status of the result indicators for 2010, and the result indicators for 2011. Mr. Speaker, in this recurrent budget BRAGSA will then prepare its own budget to fit into this figure. But I want to say to this, it is an encouragement to BRAGSA and it is intended as an incentive to BRAGSA, reverse incentive, if you want to call it that. We have reduced your budget. You therefore need to go out there and earn some money on your own, because they can compete out there. They can bid and tender on contracts, the same private sector that you want us to compete in IT, where you want the government,.. [Interjection] You see you cannot argue on one side of the fence. BRAGSA can compete like Housing and Land Development Corporation can compete, like GESCO that was created under the New Democratic Party administration can compete, like Food City can compete.

Mr. Speaker, so it chooses well, they chose it, they cannot make up their mind. We are saying let it be competitive. The private sector has the edge any day in this, they can get things done cheaper than utilizing government workers. No question in my mind about it. There is more efficiency in a private sector

construction firm than there is in the Public Works Department. Efficiency for savings and everything else. So you want to describe as competing, that is why you wanted to close it down. That is why nobody wanted the job of Brian George. [interjection] I said so. I know. You did not hear what I just say, you all did done slice up the cake, you know. If I call the names of who wanted what and who got what, you would want to know how I know all those information there. Do you know how I know that you all were going to change your ad to “It’s Time”, and I ran ads for the whole week before you change to “It’s Time” ask yourselves that, then you can find out many other things, how I get information on the NDP. When you in this thing long enough, you know how to get information. I could have told you the date and time when you were going to do your poster blitz. I had a picture of the poster before you put it on the pole. But I did not stop you because I found the poster them stupid. That is why we won the elections.

So, Mr. Speaker, BRAGSA will then be carrying out... I know right now in this country there are a fair amount of potholes in the road, I drive on them myself. A lot of potholes. We have been having a lot of rain. I mean, if you check this week from Thursday last week until now, it is like everyday just pouring rain every night, showers and showers and heavy winds. And we will go once this rain breaks, we will start the patching of potholes and I want to say this, we just spent over a hundred and something million dollars repairing and rebuilding the road from Fancy to Kingstown. I am not going to allow it to deteriorate as the Minister of Works. Those areas that are weak, we will go out there and we will patch them and we will fix them properly.

And let me tell you where I am going to get the money from. If you go to page number 55, page 608, you will see lots of retention monies there in the Capital Estimates for Windward Highway, read the accounts you will see, all of them, retention money, retention money, retention money. You know why we kept back retention money, to make sure that the defects liability period that we check that the job was well done. So if the job isn’t well done, I will find the money somehow to start patching from the First February once the rains breaks, but I know that the government will be reimbursed by the reduction in these retention monies, to these companies who built the Windward Highway. I am upset about it, because it started under my reign as Minister of Works. There were three sections of the Windward Highway, one from Georgetown to Basin Hole, if you check that piece, not a single pothole in there in that piece of road, not a drain break up, that was done by Franco Construction. There was another contract from Georgetown to San Souci Gap Canal where you go up to Diamond, that was done by Dipcon. There have been numerous repairs to potholes since that road has been constructed but the worst lot is from Diamond to Kingstown. Bad, bad, bad holes, the drainage blocking up easily. Designs were obviously not carried out properly or not done properly. Mr. Speaker, it is the intention of this Minister as Minister of Works to correct those works and somebody has to pay from their retention money. That is how I see fairness given to the people of this country. They pay their taxes.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: You have ten minutes to...

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Fine enough for me, Mr. Speaker. I think I have made the substantial part of my delivery already.

Mr. Speaker, under Capital Estimates, I think I would just like to go them down, on page 606, that is Ministry of Agriculture, 608 is my ministry, learning resource centres, and I was making the point earlier on, if you check

in revenue, you will see and you look for the extension counterpart contribution to learning resource centres, we are put that in \$100,000.00, and if you look on the other side, you will see under Account No. 550307 \$2 million to build learning resource centres in Troumaca, Central and West Kingstown.

Rehabilitation of the Lively and Cra Macabou roads, you have \$135,000.00 under counterpart and we have \$465,000.00 under grants and that is for the fixing of Cra Macabou and Lively roads. Those things have been around for a while, Mr. Speaker, the money is there. This year we intend to spend it. And this is where I also have a quarrel with the Leader of the Opposition, the amount of money we have in the Capital Budget is easily implementable. Because it is smaller and the projects are practical.

We have \$3 million to finish off the Customs Building, there was a problem with the contractor and he gave up the job and it was re-tendered so \$3 million was put in here under local loans to complete this project. It is time that we get it. In fact the decking that they have there would have to come down because all that plywood that they have there is rotten now.

Colonarie Bridge, there is money in here for Colonarie Bridge, the by-pass and also money to start the construction of the Colonaire Bridge.

Kingstown clean up, the project that I started under the previous administration in a different ministry has followed me into this ministry and I am fortunate to have received again the portfolio of local government. And I want to thank the Prime Minister for giving me back local government because I do not like to leave behind any unfinished task. So if he gives me five years with local government I am sure that we will get the Kingstown clean up going long before the five year period finishes. So we have money for that. South Leeward Highway it is in a terrible state, there is \$200,000.00 there for consultancy fees under local loans and then on the other side under external loans you have \$500,000.00 a rehabilitation of the South Leeward. So there are \$700,000.00 there to start some work on the South Leeward. And all the others that I referred to the Windward Highway rehabilitation and then retention money for the library project, Mr. Speaker.

Feeder roads, we intend to spend some money on Feeder roads and the farmers can expect that once the dry season comes in and we get some release from the Ministry of Finance those feeder roads will take on a new look.

Mr. Speaker, Calliaqua Town Hall, there is a certain candidate in the last elections who said that when they won the elections they were going to demolish it, because it was not suitable for the people of East St. George. Well fortunately for us, unfortunately for him and fortunately for the people he lost the election and we will finish the Town Hall and give them a classy hall for the parliamentary representative Honourable Clayton Burgin, Minister of Housing, et cetera, so that he can deliver this project to the people of East St. George.

Mr. Speaker, we have some money here for some bridges, I want to make sure that I find that, if one of you can find that for me and tell me what is the number, the Pebbles bridge round here, rehabilitation of bridges, yes on page 610, Account No. 559701 \$1 million to rehabilitate bridges, including Verbeke that is the people's bridge, Fort Charlotte and I think there are two others. Let me just tell you what they are Francois, Swamp Gut in

Layou, Francois, Vermont and the Verbeke Bridge and Fort Charlotte Bridge and we should be getting those on the way.

Mr. Speaker, the Vigie Highway. I know I have been criticized on numerous occasions under the NDP FM for stating years ago that I have money in the estimates to fix the Vigie Highway. Well part of it is fixed and I have come back now, and I say again, regardless of how many criticisms, I have money inside of the estimates to do the further 1,000 foot of asphalt road and rehabilitation from the roundabout upwards. What is not done in that strip of road will be done including 2500 feet of sidewalks. That is something that is missing on that piece of road, a sidewalk. Right now we have side walk going down to Yvette Pork City and so on, but when you going up Vigie stretch as we call it, you do not have any sidewalks there. So they would be doing 2500 feet of sidewalks there.

Mr. Speaker, I have absolutely no hesitation in supporting these estimates. We all look forward to the debate next week for the budget and I guarantee the people of this country that they made the right decision on December 13th, the majority in any case. I hear argument in this parliament this morning, in this House this morning about whether the Attorney General has a right to vote or not. The people out there who had a right to vote, so whether you take the vote inside of the House or you take the vote outside of the House, it is the same result. You are losing. You have lost in 1998 with the popular vote, you lost in 2001 with the popular vote, you lost in 2005 with the popular vote and you won the election in the referendum, 13-2 and we came back and won it 8-7 still with the popular vote.

Mr. Speaker, I stand proud here again and I am honoured and pleased to have been selected by our esteemed political leader and Prime Minister to name me as Senator and again giving me a ministerial portfolio. I want to thank the people of this country. They are responsible for my being here in this parliament and I thank them very much. We normally give greetings at Christmas time in our budget, Mr. Speaker, and our Estimates and Merry Christmas. I want to say to the people of this country, and especially the poor class of people, those who are dispossessed that what you see, what you have received for the last ten years under this administration you will get more of it in this coming. And this is why we can happily come to this Parliament and pass a deficit budget to give you an extra \$4 million in 2011 in public assistance. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Further debate? Honourable Member for the Northern Grenadines.

THE DR. HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to make my contribution to the debate, and the 2011 estimates. I was a little amused when I heard the Honourable Senator, and it is still senator, say that the NDP we lost in 2001, and we lost in 2005 and we lost in 2010 and I thought he was going to say that I lost in 2005. [Interjection] Well I look forward to that.

But, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition this morning pointed out as he as always done with the precision of somebody who understands these matters, the fallacy that is inherent in the 2011 estimates. The fact that there is a huge gap between what is source funding and where the remainder of the money is going to come from to fund the project and the operations of government. I can't say it any better than him and anybody with any common sense would understand what he is saying and see that there is no rebuking for what he said

and if the Honourable Senator Francis in a sense admit it that what he was saying is right, but his argument this year, is not that there is no deficit but which is what they try to sustain in the previous years but that the deficit is a good thing, so that is a change in the position, if that is the position well so be it but the fact is the estimates as presented are not financed from sources presented in it, so those monies has to be found and I haven't heard anything in what he said or what the Prime Minister said this morning that suggests that there is any meaningful way of bridging the gap.

We talk about BRAGSA competing to make up in declining its revenue, on a one hand he says that BRAGSA should go out to compete but then he seems to be saying that the Private Sector would out compete BRAGSA, so I don't know whether BRAGSA is being set up or whether the Honourable Minister mean something else in what he is saying that I can't comprehend.

There are, Mr. Speaker, in my own responsibilities on the Opposition side, I am going to focus on the tourism area but of course there are things in my constituency because I am an elected Member of this House so I have to look out for the interest of my constituents, that I will also be using to illustrate some of the gaps and some of the things in this Estimate which I find unacceptable and I know that my constituents who supported me overwhelmingly in the last General Elections will also find [Applause] will also find unsatisfactory. [Interjection] At least he has the courage to run.

Mr. Speaker, I want to look first of all at the Ministry of Legal Affairs because there are few things there, it's not usually an exciting area but there are few things there that need clarification and they simple don't add up. First of all one of the result indicators, which is at Page 498, no wonder they accuse of not referencing the section. We look at Page 498 of the estimates, Mr. Speaker, the result indicators is one of the few areas in the estimates that where the intention of the Ministry the objectives are put out in clear words and a comment is made as to whether they have achieved it or to what extent they have achieved it or whether they have abandoned it.

There are a number of things that are related here to accession to various international treaties and so on but towards the end of the report on the 2010 indicators at Page 498, there is a section there that talks about, it says one of the objectives is to assist sixth form students by exposing them to the practical workings of the Legal system and the comment on that is that they Ministry hosted five students and in bracket is says "University level during the months of June to August". The question is whether this is being put forward as having achieved the objective or whether this is some different program that is being put here basically because nothing was done to assist with the objective of assisting sixth form students. I know the Ministry hires Junior Law Students and so on but the objective here says that it was to assist sixth form students, there's no reference to any sixth form students being assisted and if this is going to presented, honestly and straightforwardly it should have said that nothing was accomplished in that area and if there is a program to assist university level students then put that down as a result indicator as well and you could indicate it as achieved but I think that this is really a fudging of what is going on with that particular program.

[Interjection]

It says, Mr. Speaker, [Interjection],I don't think the Minister will consider his programmes as mosquito programmes, continue to participate in the council of legal education, annual and service training, there in the

result indicators nothing is mentioned as to say whether it was ever applied, whether it succeeded or whether nothing in fact was done. So there again, the result indicator indicated that nothing was accomplished with respect to that programme. Then there is the indicator which says that one of the objectives of the Ministry is to continue to guard the public interest and that is very broad, very general. I do not know exactly what they have in mind. But what it says in the comment is that it would fully achieve. So it is good to know that the Ministry of Legal Affairs has achieved the objective of guarding the public interest. But perhaps when the Prime Minister speaks he can say what exactly falls under that category.

Mr. Speaker, I would like a clarification as well, there is an indicator here that indicates that the Ministry is to continue to provide legal aid services and under indicators the results says that the Ministry provided assistance to citizens with the correction of birth certificates, deaths and marriage certificates and so on. But the part that puzzles me, it says that to date we have successfully assisted approximately 800 citizens, with no time frame. So I would like an indication as to whether that was during the year 2010, or whether it is since the Ministry has been assisting persons in that regard.

Finally under this Ministry, Mr. Speaker, one of the indicators states that the Ministry would coordinate with the National Properties Limited for the design and start-up of construction of the Hall of Justice at Richmond Hill. I will read that again, coordinate with National Properties Limited for the design and start-up of construction of the Hall of Justice at Richmond Hill. And under the comment it says, it was fully achieved. Again I am not sure what exactly was being done. I am not aware of any Hall of Justice being started far less being completed. So perhaps, when the Minister responds he can explain exactly what is being done under that particular objective. [Interjection] It says start up construction, it does not just say design. If you read it carefully you would see what it says. I read it twice you know. And that was for your edification.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to the Ministry of Tourism, which is the area that I tend to focus most in my presentation on the Estimates and the debate on the budget because the Ministry of Tourism is one of the most important ministries of government because it is the area where we expect to drive the economy of this country and the medium and near term. It is the area of the economy, Mr. Speaker, which now earns the most foreign Exchange, yet it is an area of the economy which has been troubled considerably over the past eight or nine years, particularly in the yachting subsector and which seems to have lost its way over the years. We now have a third minister in the past ten years and because it is so important to the livelihoods of people of this country, so important to the economy, I really do hope the Minister succeeds. Because it is also important to my constituency. We depend a lot on tourism, particularly in yachting and it pains me to see that over the years how things have fallen apart in that industry and no matter how seriously, we petition this government for various changes, it seems that because the petition comes from this side of the House that it regarded with suspicion and simply ignored.

One of the things we usually comment about in the Estimates because we could have seen the figure before is to see to what extent the ministry has invested resources in the promotion of tourism, the advertising of tourism abroad. The promotion of packages, of tours, and we looked at the budget that was allocated to that over the years. I know there had been some increases, Mr. Speaker. We felt that given the growing importance of that ministry to the economy that it was not satisfactory. Now of course, we would not have the actual breakdown

of how much is being spent in advertising and so on, because it is all covered in a transfer of \$14 million to the Tourism Authority. So we have to simply watch and see how the Tourism Authority functions and hope that it produces the results it was intended when it was created.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to turn to page 536 again these are the result indicators for the ministry...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: 536 you said?

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Yes. One of the things that they indicated was that they would pursue initiatives in collaboration with the Communication Unit and the relevant stakeholders to enhance the yachting sector through continued efforts to address the boat boy issues. Mr. Speaker, the boat boy issues that they talk about, this is an area which has been brought to the attention of this ministry. I had done so and I know people who work in that industry have done so over the years, to address some of the problems that they encounter and the problems the yacht visitors when they come in, have reported that they have encountered. But meetings were held I know with some of the people in industry. They have asked for regularization of their profession because they provide a service and to have some regulation of it. And I personally was invited for two meetings, seven, eight years ago, and more recently probably about four years ago and still nothing has been done and the situation continues where the people in the industry who provide a service they feel that they are not appreciated, that they are considered almost like a nuisance and the people who use their service cannot rely on probably regulator services provided. And this is something, Mr. Speaker, that needs urgent attention and I hope that the Minister listens. Because the yachting sector, you know if you look at the records in the Estimates, the performance by the... [Interjection] I know what I am talking about, okay? If you do not know what I am talking about, ask the Speaker for an explanation. Mr. Speaker, the... [Interjection] [Desk thumping]. Thank you. The Estimates talks here about liaison with the boat boys. I am dealing with that from your document. That is what I am responding to. The problem is a real one and one that I think the Minister will do well to listen. I have been doing this much longer than he has. And it is something that he needs to bend his ear to and listen to the people in the industry and try and fix the problems.

In particular, Mr. Speaker, the comment on that particular result or at least objective, says that the ministry would hold meetings with the boat boys in Central Leeward and North Leeward communities. My question is that, why stop there? Because the bulk of the industry is actually in the Grenadines and there is nothing to indicate that any attention was paid to it in the area where the problems are really manifested. If you want to be serious about dealing with the problems, well deal with the problems where they are most serious. Do not tinker around the hedges.

There is another area, Mr. Speaker, in the last Estimates, I had raised the issue of the fixing of the walkway down along the Belmont shoreline. Anybody who knows Bequia knows that the area from the church all the way down to what is now called Plantation House but used to be Sunny Caribe that that is an area of prime tourists' attraction. Lots of economic activity but it is an area where access is difficult. Because most of the access from the landside is hemmed in by private property and most people access it around the waterfront. When hurricane Omar struck, I think October, November 2008, the walkway completely was destroyed. I brought it to the attention of the minister in the House and indicated that an allocation must be made to repair

this because it is not just a convenience it is an important part of doing business along that waterfront. It is an important part of our tourism. Lip service was paid to it and nothing was done. Mr. Speaker, the people who operate their businesses along that area, they did what they could to fix it, but it is a major problem because it needs to be done in a proper way. I say in a newspaper recently a boardwalk that was done I think out at Villa that was completed and it looks very nice, you know. And I think that the idea now has to be extended to fix the walkway along the Belmont shore in Bequia. Recently there was heavy surge during the Christmas holiday season and the walkway was, if it was bad before now it is almost impassable. I tried walking down there a few weeks ago and Mr. Speaker, I almost fell twice and I knew what to look forward too. And it is a very serious matter because the access to that area is important to the livelihoods of the people along that area but also to the product that we offer in terms of tourism. And it can be done to be an even more attractive, to make area more attractive as a tourism site, so I want to urge the minister to extend the approach of developing the waterfront and to do so again in an area where the problem is more serious. Go and see it yourself, do not wait for reports from people who are on the ground there, because they only tell you what you want to hear. You know, there are problems they minimize them because you do not want to hear about problems. I am the one who brings the problems to you because the people come to me to ask for redress. They tend to represent the interest of the government on the ground there, so you should go and see it for yourself.

Mr. Speaker, we also have to think outside of the box in a way too, you know. I have over the past two parliaments been pressing the case of the people of the village of Paget Farm. I would like to see more done in the fishing industry, but lately I have been thinking, Mr. Speaker, that we have to think beyond that. The waterfront in Paget farm all along the road way is desperate need of coastal defence works and that can be done. There are no allocations of course in the Estimates, but I am not bound simply to comment on what is here, I can tell you what should have been here, and I know that there are instances also in other communities where there are things that are more important to the people living in those communities with which are not captioned here in these figures in the Estimates. So I would just put that out for now that the coastal waterfront that is an area that needs urgent attention. It can be done again as a tourist attraction but more than that it requires stabilizing of the road. It is required to stabilize people's property, their boats, their homes and the roadway. People do things, like they dump rocks and dirt and all kinds of stuff at the front there to try and keep back the tide but of course, the water is relentless it washes out the dirt after the while and what is left there becomes unsightly. Attention ought to be paid if we are serious about promoting tourism, remember the airport is down that side. I noticed that the rocks on the side of the road coming up at Casson Hill they are all freshly painted in white, I assume it is because we are coming from the airport and going to the airport. [Interjection] The NDP thing. Maybe I should paint the rocks in Paget Farm then? And you will come and paint them over too?

Mr. Speaker, this is not a joke the waterfront needs urgent attention. Whenever there is a storm, you can never be sure that the road itself would not be damaged. And I know that there are funds available in the international community for doing this sort of thing. There is a beautiful job that was done down at Layou a similar project like that would do wonders in the community of Paget Farm. Mr. Speaker, that project should have been in these Estimates and I would continue to push for it until it is done so.

Now, part of tourism is promotion of tourism sites and I know in past Estimates money has been allocated to develop certain sites, heritage sites or new sites or access roads, funds have been allocated to build access roads in places like Trinity Falls, that is all good. [Interjection] 19 of them. Yes. Mr. Speaker, the point I am coming back to, is that you have to deal with the problem where the problems are the greatest. Not one of these access roads you are talking about is in the Grenadines. You know that. Well, you should be ashamed of I then, if you saying that you know it; and you are the minister responsible so it is now in your court.

I had somebody came to me, a tourist who had been coming to Bequia some time and she met me at the reef recently. Dr. Friday congratulations on your re-election, I can see why the people voted for you, and then she said, Mr. Speaker, the roads down to the tourism site down at Hamilton Point, the Guns down at Hamilton, we call it Battery Hill there is nothing in the Estimates that provides for that road and I noticed that there is provision there for rehabilitations of roads that are access roads to tourism sites.

Now, I think the taxi drivers are soon going to stop taking people there. The last time I went there, do you know, what people did, they dumped rocks in the road to try and level it out so that they can have access to go down there. It so bad now, if had been fixed six or seven years ago when I brought it to the attention of this Honourable House maintenance work could have done it. Now the whole thing will have to be repaired. It is in terrible state. I mean it is virtually inaccessible. People have to throw stuff in the road now so that they, the taxi drivers they have the route that they do for tourists when the cruise ships come in, in order to get access to go down to that point which is a beautiful view of Admiralty Bay and Lower Bay and Mt. Pleasant and the whole side of Bequia, magnificent, and then down to Western Cay. And if you had done that at the time when as the old people say 'a stitch in time, saves nine'.

Now you have to go and take money from BRAGSA who has a declining budget to do a major project that should have been done easily years ago. That is poor planning. And you are bragging about BRAGSA. If BRAGSA is your child, it is a malnourished child. It is a child that is on life support. It is a child that Social Services should take away from you, because Mr. Speaker, it is doing so poorly. I know in my constituency and I have driven across part of mainland too, there are potholes the size of swimming pools in the roads in St. Vincent, you know. In my own community going up to Mt. Pleasant you have to be careful not to ride too far to the edge of the road because you are going to tip over, the whole thing is broken down. [Interjection] Sir James must fix the public road? Well, you must have a fixation with Sir James. Sir James is not the only person who lives in Bequia, you know. [Interjections]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, let us carry on the debate please. Stop the sideshow.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Ah well. All I know, Mr. Speaker, is that BRAGSA could ill afford to have funds taken away from it. From \$19 million down to \$16.5 million, and now they are saying too, that this poor, malnourished child, the brain child of the Honourable Minister that as ill equipped as you are, you have to go out now and compete with the private sector to make up the rest of the money. And when they make up the money what are they going to do? Throw a big party like last Tuesday? Or are they going to use it to fix the roads? Well, Mr. Speaker, it is not doing what it is supposed to do. And it is ironic. I mean I have spoken so much, I have not seen any allocations in here for general repairs of roads. But I will leave that

to the member on my side who will deal with that. Because my time I am sure... how much time I have left, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: You have 11 minutes.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Eleven minutes, thank you. Now, Mr. Speaker, the next issue I want to deal with goes to the core of what the Tourism Ministry does and that is to attract people to St. Vincent and the Grenadines so that they can spend money. And so that the people who provide services can make a living and provide for their families, and do whatever else, maybe take a vacation themselves. But, the record of the ministry over the past ten years have been dismal to say the least. If we look now at the visitor arrivals. It is at page 539. Mr. Speaker, I remembered last year, you know, when the Honourable Leader of the Opposition had commented on the Estimates and saw the modest projections for increases that were put here which is that stay-over visitors would increase in 2010 by 1%. That same day visitors would increase by 1% that yachting visitors would increase by 5% and cruise by 5%. He said that basically that was almost admitting that nothing was going to happen but we did not even achieve those modest objectives.

Stay-over visitors in 2010 declined by 5%. It is the economic situation. St. Lucia you could almost swim from Fancy to St. Lucia, their category, they have increased by 11.9%. They are in a different global economy. When you are saying things like that you should do your comparative analysis first. Stay-over visitors declined by 5%. Same day visitors increased by 3.2%. Remember stay-over visitors, you know, these are the people who stay in hotels and guesthouses and villas, and apartments. This where you earn the real money. These are the people whom you want to come and stay longer and that is where we are having problems. Yachting has indicated increase by 8.2% that is a positive sign but remember the context in [which] we are operating in between 2001 and 2009 you had a constant decline every single year except one in the yachting sector. Every year. So we have had a loss of approaching 30%, so every year that you increase by 8%, that does not even make up for where we were five years ago. And before we start feeling too comfortable, St. Lucia increased by 29.3% during the same period, between January and June in the same year last year. [Interjection] International airports? The yachts come on international airports? This is like mouth open, story jump out. I mean. We are talking about yachting, yachting. You know, that thing that sail on the water. What do you know about it? Mr. Speaker, they do not fly down their yachts, do not bother with that. You do not know what you are talking about.

The point is Mr. Speaker, if do not admit we have a problem, we cannot solve it. So you want to put your head in the sand all the time and blame somebody else. The fact is we are losing ground to other places like St. Lucia and Grenada who were playing catch up to us, 10, 15 years ago, you know. [interjection] Honourable Minister, I understand your concern but I am very passionate about this. And it is something that I do not think the Honourable Members on the other side take serious enough. I have seen people who lose their businesses because of what is happening. I spoke to a woman recently, 25 years she has been providing services to the yachts, she said Dr. Friday I have never seen it like this in my life. Why? She is not a big business person. [Interjection] Well, what I want you to do is to take it seriously, because this is very important, because the ECCB says that yachting contributes more than any other sector in tourism in terms of per capita per arrivals. And there are things that we do, Mr. Speaker, that are so silly sometimes if I were the minister, you said you

wanted an alternative budget or an alternative estimates, here is what I would say. [Interjection] You see you are out of ideas and you want ours, and I will just give you one. If you have cruising yachts that come in, what is the disadvantage if a yachtsman comes here and say he wants to spend the whole year in Bequia harbour. All he does is spends money, instead we harass them and says you have to get a permit to stay for one month and then you have to go and renew for three months and then they are denied capriciously and they have to leave and they go and spend their money in Grenada and in St. Lucia? What sense does that make? [Interjection] No. Check it out you will see. Take for example, in the regatta area, I do not see anything in the Estimates.

The regatta is such an important thing, it is like carnival now, it should have its separate item in the Estimates now, the Bequia Regatta where a provision is made for it. Because all the people that come for that even come from overseas. Very few locals returning and staying at home, they come and they stay in guesthouses, they stay on their yachts and they buy services and we need to provide spend a lot more in encouraging it and developing it. The budget has been fixed, I do not know, I think it is \$15,000 that has been given to the regatta committee every year. I was told that in Grenada they gave over \$100,000.00 and they do not have anything of what we have to offer. And if we do not wake up, Mr. Speaker, and smell the coffee we will be left behind in this area as well.

Mr. Speaker, small things, but small things make so much difference to people. Last year I reported that during the cruise tourist season, they have a light and a jetty in Bequia where the tenders come in, a big light, and it is high up, I do not know if they cannot get to it or not. When the bulb blows, nobody can see what to do in the night. I reported it, I said it is one off thing it is not going to happen again, it happened again this year when a cruise ship was in the harbour. The people came in they could not see what they were doing, a policeman had to come and put his vehicle light so that they could come and go. They called the person who is in charge and say listen the light is out come and fix it; his response was that, the people should stay on board the ship, if they cannot see to come ashore, you know, for their own safety and security. How are we going to make any money? He is paying the mortgage of the person who built a restaurant and is expecting service from those people. He pays the rent for the person who rents a space to run a bar to provide service to these people. We cannot be so ridiculous and callous. And these seems to be small things but they occur again. I do not talk about it much when it happens the first time because I say okay, everybody makes a mistake, but it happen again this year, and when Minister Beache was the minister, he and I spoke about that on the same jetty, and I said listen you have cruise ships in the harbour here and they come ashore, a little shelter at the end of the wharf, you know, so that they can sit there and do not be in the sun when they are dealing with the people who are going in and out of the boat. [Interjection] Yeah, it is a joke, it is a big joke.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have two minutes to wind up.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. But these are things, Mr. Speaker, that if we are serious we have to get those small things right as well.

Now, I want to talk about the... I can see in the Estimates there was a reference to the website which had how many hits, it is a good idea to start the website, 250,000 hits, and how many bookings from it, it says none. Yeah, we have to... [Interjection] we have to... because I want to see if you know, you know everything you

see. I want to see that that initiative that some attention is given to see why it is that you have 250,000 hits and not a single booking, something got to be wrong there. So minister look into it. It is not personal, but this has to do with the development of the country, and the livelihoods of the people in my constituency and maybe some in yours.

Now, finally, Mr. Speaker, there is nothing in these Estimates again for the public washrooms with the current Minister of Transport and Works was to build back in 2001 and 2002. Do you remember that, Minister, you were here at the time, he took the money and he built a road, somewhere up in Union Vale and he said he would put it back and he would build a public washroom. It is an urgent need in Port Elizabeth. [Interjection] You are fixated with that, I am talking about the people, now, this is something that needs to be done, and I tell you, some of their own supporters, you know, the few they have left in the Grenadines, have decided that they are not going to support them anymore because of this particular issue. So it is an important one to the community as well, not just for the tourists who come and enjoy our shores.

Now, I want to say one thing, Mr. Speaker, one item from the Ministry of Health. There is at page 427 a water project in Bequia, page 427, Mr. Speaker. I will wrap up now but I just need to make a comment. Yes I will, under the Ministry of Health, there is one item here that concerns my constituency, and it says, that the result indicators, the result was to implement a pilot special adaptation to climate change project in Bequia that will install a reverse osmosis salt water desalination plant that is powered by wind generated electricity to serve the residents of Paget Farm, and the result said it is incomplete that the wind generated energy has been replaced by solar energy and the equipment is being sourced.

Mr. Speaker, I want to go on record in this House to indicate that I support that project. Now, a lot of inaccurate, to use the polite term, information was put out against me during the political campaign about that, to say that I block the project because I said that the turbine would kill bats. What I know about turbine and bats? Mr. Speaker, if you telling me about a cricket bat maybe I can say something, but for me to say that I do not like the project because the wind turbine going to kill bats, you have to have a fantastically imagination. The point is, it was a person from CWSA when I asked him why are you putting the turbine in a populated area and not in an unpopulated area, out at the East End for example, he said they went out there and they have bats out there and the turbine would kill the bats. Right? You could ask them, they said that. Now, the switch it around to say that Friday kill the project because he said the turbine would kill the bats. Well, I want to go on record to say that I did not say that, in fact, what I suggested to them, is why not use solar panels instead, it is less intrusive, it is less maintenance and it is something that you can expand easily. I am happy to see, Mr. Speaker, that in the results indicators they have said that they will now use solar energy rather than the turbine. So sometimes I suppose they listen. I am much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, running on bonus. Further debate? Honourable Member for the Southern Grenadines. When you are ready, go ahead.

HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE: Thank you, very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to make my contribution to the debate of the Estimates of revenue and expenditure for 2011. Indeed before I do so, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all new members

of the House, especially my long-time friend and teacher the Honourable Member for North Leeward, and also to all other members and let us hope that the time here in this Honourable House would be a profitable and rewarding one.

Mr. Speaker, the Estimates of revenue and expenditure for 2011, indeed represents a decline in regards to the 2010 estimates, and that was pointed out before by the Honourable Prime Minister and the Honourable Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition also pointed out that there was a cut in the capital budget in regards to 2011 as compared to 2010. Indeed, I heard the Honourable Senator Francis saying that there was a reduction because poor will have more money to spend, if I am correct if that is the statement that he used, but Mr. Speaker, I want to deal with the Estimates as it relates to bread and butter issues of people especially the poor people throughout St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Firstly, Mr. Speaker, I want to look at the financial summary and when we look at the areas of goods and services we see that there is a reduction of over \$2 million. Now, Mr. Speaker, the areas of goods and services relates to provisions that are made for the proper functioning of various organs in government, various ministries. And they would relate to things like the purchasing of drugs for the hospital in relation to the paper, stationary and other things for the proper functioning of government and things like that. Mr. Speaker, if we are seriously considering dealing with poor people and how the budget affects them then there would be interventions in the budget that would seek to alleviate some of the problems that poor people face in the various communities in our country.

Just last week, Mr. Speaker, I have had complaints, numerous phone calls from the various persons within my constituency calling about the lack of drugs at the health clinics. Mr. Speaker, if we are really looking, as we say, to give poor people more money to spend, how is it that we cannot supply adequate drugs at our local health centres. Let us think about the same poor old woman who cannot afford to buy her pressure tablets. As a matter of fact, one of them called me and told me that she was told to go the pharmacy where she can purchase these pressure tablets. Mr. Speaker, it is issues like that we should be looking at in crafting our estimates in dealing with things that affect our people.

Mr. Speaker, let us not forget the problem which was highlighted in this House during the budget debate last year, about the threats that were made if we do not pay our bills to the OECS Pharmaceutical Procurement Services out of St. Lucia, so it is very important. We talk about health, and wellness, and if we want a healthy society then we must ensure that we prepare for our citizens adequately so once our people are healthy they would be more productive.

Mr. Speaker, in the result indicators on page 426 it talks about the development plan for the reallocation of the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital. There is no doubt that both sides of the House recognize that there is a need for proper health facility in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and that major improvements must be done at the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital. Mr. Speaker, the result indicator said the plan is still to be developed. This will [be] done immediately after the pre-feasibility assessment to be completed by December 2010. Further, on in the 2011 result indicator, I believe that same issue has arisen.

It says develop a plan for the relocation of the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital, what I want to ask the Honourable Minister is has the pre-feasibility assessment study been conducted. It was supposed to be completed in December 2010, as I see here in the result indicator and if so what are the results?

Mr. Speaker, the concern is not only of the relocation of the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital, but we also have to be concern about the present condition of the hospital and the services that are being offered while we look into the feasibility of building a proper health facility.

Mr. Speaker, within the Estimates, I believe on page 612 there has been an allocation of \$500,000.00 to be used for such project. Mr. Speaker, on a regular basis we have our citizens having to travel to Grenada, Barbados, Trinidad in search of proper, quality health care. I know and I have seen the pain, sometimes that they feel, because I remember just two years ago and it was even more so frustrating for me having been in the Grenadines and having to travel to overseas, having to find the money in order to take my younger daughter for medical services abroad and even up to now, the fees are still being paid much so for poor people who have to go through that similar situation in order to take care of their family.

Mr. Speaker, I mention the Grenadines and the pain and the helplessness sometimes that we feel, because it is in this House that I also brought to the fore the problems that the people of the Grenadines face in terms of emergency cases. And I know the Honourable Minister of Health, sometimes he might be aware of how we have to travel. It was just Sunday night I was in Mayreau waiting on one of the local speedboat to go back to Union Island and a situation arose and I found that that man was in such extreme pain. I am only mentioning this so that you can get an idea of how it is. And during that hour of the night on rough seas and in such pain and have to travel to Union Island. If the case was that severe, he had also to go to the extent where he had to charter a flight and I have been told you have to pay something like US \$895.00 which is over EC \$2,000.00 just to come to the mainland to seek further medical care, what about if you had to go overseas.

I think that it is time that we sit and work out something reasonable and feasible for the people of the Grenadines in order to get quality health care. Sometime last year there was an elderly lady in Canouan and she took sick and they had to charter a flight. It was paid by a private entity and from time to time, month to month the members of the family had to be paying back that bill. Something must be done to assist the people of the Grenadines because the burden is even harder on the people of the Grenadines to get proper medical care. It is not what I want; it is what the people want. And as I said before we can sit down as reasonable and responsible people and work out a solution to the problem.

Mr. Speaker, [Interjection] I do not run things? The Most High does. And the people of the Grenadines voted for me so I must bring their concerns to this Honourable House where they would be properly addressed.

Mr. Speaker, so on that note there is also the need for the improvement in the health services that are being offered in the Grenadines. Look at the major health clinics, the hospitals, we could call them that, at Bequia, Canouan, Union Island, Mayreau is a clinic but you also need improvement there. Because as I said before even time to time, whether it is raining, when the problem arises you just have to get on that speedboat and head to Union Island. Whether it is rough, calm or whatever it is. And these are not big things, they are small. I would like, as I have said, the Honourable Minister of Health has an idea and sometimes if you are not, you know, I may be talking about it and you are not accustomed or aware of what I am talking about, of what the

problem is, but if you will come there and see for yourselves, then you would say the people of the Grenadines are brave, we have guts, they are strong, they are resilient. And something must be done in order to help them in this area of having proper, basic health care.

Mr. Speaker, I see in the Estimates on page 426, that there is a provision there to conduct a patient satisfaction survey in community health services, 426. Mr. Speaker, the result indicator states that this survey was not done. But if we do that survey, Mr. Speaker, we will get an indication of what the people face, and you might likely hear areas that they would wish improvement will come. So I think it is also repeated in the result indicators for 2011, and I am hoping that that survey is conducted quickly, so that the people of the Grenadines will get their issues address adequately and quickly.

Mr. Speaker, this initiative with this survey it would, as I said before, would be seen as a measure for the poor people because they are mostly those who use the community health centres and services and things like that; they are the ones who go there on a regular basis so it would be a measure in order to assist the poor people and to help them to ensure that their health needs are looked after.

Mr. Speaker, also on page 426, we have reconstruction of the Bequia Health complex, the doctor's quarters and a new health centre with funds from BNTF and the project as the result indicator stated that work was expected to commence during the last quarter of 2010. My colleague the Honourable Representative for the Northern Grenadines has informed me that no work was started in December of 2010, but we are hoping that it would commence early this year. Because, not only that, Mr. Speaker, I have noticed here that you also have provisions that are to be made for the purchasing of generators, not only for Bequia and Chateaubelair, but I am hoping that that problem will be fixed soon and quickly, because the present generator it is not working; when electricity goes then you have a problem, in terms of the vaccines and things like that Mr. Speaker.

The recent storm Tomas should have, should bring to [the] fore what it would be like in case electricity has been knocked out for a long time, then what happens at these Community Health Centres, what are people to do, so they must be fully equipped, not only for the daily service but also in times when we have disasters so that we can adequately provide for our people. I am even told that provision has been made at Canouan, the one at the police station is supposed to be hooked up because of the close proximity to the generator there, it is supposed to be hook up to the health centre in Canouan and that has not been done. So even when electricity goes and things like that and we have these major problems and as we say, Mr. Speaker, these are the bread and butter issues that are affecting our people. So what happens when the medicines which are supposed to be kept at proper temperature and electricity goes what happen to them. Then you have to replace them, you do not get them in time but you have people who are there waiting on such supplies. And Mr. Speaker, it is very important that we provide adequately for our people, Mr. Speaker. Not only, for the provision of the generators, but we must also ensure that we have a proper maintenance programme from time to time because sometimes we put them there and we leave them there, and that is about it. And when problems arise we find now that they are not working. So from time to time, Mr. Speaker, we must have a proper maintenance programme in place to ensure that whatever facilities we put there, whatever are there we ensure that the lives of our people are better, and they function in a way that they should.

Mr. Speaker, inside the Estimates on page 612 we also have, I just like to make one recommendation, I know when we reach the capital side, the print is so small; [Interjection] yeah, my glasses is in Union so that is the problem, so Mr. Speaker, the print is so small, [Interjection] that may not work. Then you never know, I may see red.

Mr. Speaker, there is a provision for the refurbishment of the doctors and nurses quarters at various locations and some locations on the mainland St. Vincent and as I said Bequia was also mentioned, but some years ago, in this Honourable House the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs, he was Minister of Health I complained about the facilities at the Celena Clouden Hospital, that is the main hospital at Clifton, Union Island. We talked about the building that was there and he said that it was unfit for use but we had to rent separate quarters for the doctors and other facilities that were being used there, would have been housed there had to be relocated elsewhere but I am told that the building is still used, at least part of the downstairs as laundry, and things like that, because if the building is condemned, then why is it still in use?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: If my Honourable friend would give way. As regards the quarters for doctors and nurses in Union Island there is a component of the tenth EDF, European Union Financed Programme where the focal sector is health, in that there is a component to build these facilities down at Union Island, the nurses and doctors quarters. You would not have seen them as I had explained when I made my presentation this morning that we do not anticipate that we would probably get those monies until probably the last quarter because of the uncertainty. [Inaudible] Sometimes you have to choose what you put inside of the budget in terms of... make sure you have the funding, but if we get the funding in time, we will begin the process in relation to that particular project which you raise. Because there are series of components, I made all those components public and so had the Ministry Health and that was one of them.

HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE: Thank you, very much, Honourable Prime Minister.

And when we think about health care, we are not only thinking about buildings, we also think in terms of the quality of service that is being offered. And we still have the problem in the Grenadines where in order for you to get a blood test if you do not come to the mainland, then you have to report certain days to the clinic. Then they would draw the blood put it in a small icebox send it to the mainland. Sometimes when the blood reaches there it cannot be used, you have to go and draw the blood again and that may happen two, three times and things like that. But if we want to provide quality service to our people Mr. Speaker, then it is more than time we equip our hospital with such services so that even at times in cases of emergency once you have somebody who is trained, and they are working at the health centre the facilities are there, they can then pass the results to the doctor who will then after making his diagnosis may determine whether that person should travel to St. Vincent immediately. And by doing that we will assist poor people in having to get proper health care, Mr. Speaker. This is one measure that we can adopt in order to ensure that we cater to the needs of poor people. Because to travel to the mainland there is a cost, to stay, there is a cost, and at the end of the day once you get that result, you to take it back to the doctor at the clinic in Union or Canouan in order for them to read it and tell you what the problem is. So you see the kinds of problems the people in the Grenadines are facing on a daily basis in order to get proper health care and all these measures must be addressed and should have been addressed in the Estimates of 2011, therefore catering to the needs of the people and by doing so we would have

to some extent improved their standard of living. Because once they have proper health services they would be able to function better and be productive in whatever way they can.

Mr. Speaker, I want to also return to the financial summary and if we look on the revenue side, Capital Receipts there is an item called Other Receipts. Now, this area is comparatively the same, almost the same, just a minor increase from 2010. I have been told, as the Leader of the Opposition pointed out that the annual collection rate for other receipts is normally around 3%. Now if we are collecting around 3% every year, it means that a large portion of the money expected to be collected would not be collected. Then what are you going to do? Would you have to cut back on some services and projects that you had hoped to realize in 2011? And when you do that, what happens? Who does it affect? Is it not the same poor people whom we are so concerned about, Mr. Speaker. Is it the reason why, entities such as BRAGSA why the amount has been reduced.

If we look at roads, Mr. Speaker, throughout St. Vincent and the Grenadines and I could talk about those in the Southern Grenadines, in some cases big manhole in the middle of the road, and you meet a big red flag warning you of impending danger. And for years you are complaining; complaining, complaining, complaining, and nothing has been done. And I think of one instance the people in Union Island got so irritated that they started calling on the radio, over and over again, because I am one who believe that it is not everything you have to call on the radio to solve, you can call on the relevant minister in order to get the problem address. But when the problems are not being addressed, what you want them to do. They have to take to the airwaves, and when they take to the airwaves, then you hearing a different story. But it is time.

I remembered last year asking a question in this Honourable House, and the then Honourable Minister who was responsible for roads and things like that told me in his answer, he said, they are working on the roads in Union Island first, and when they finish Union Island, they would go to Canouan and Mayreau. But they have not reached Canouan yet. And the roads in Union Island have not been finished, Mr. Speaker. If you also check Mayreau, there are areas that are in need of Roads and drains and all sort of things that we have to look after. But I would like to send out an invitation to all our Honourable Ministers come to the Grenadines and see the problems for yourselves because sometimes the people are reporting and they are asking for years we cannot see such and such ministers, come to the Grenadines yourselves, because we are reporting these problems and they are not being addressed so the invitation is there for all to come and see. I mean the Grenadines is paradise. I am on the mainland often, you come to the Grenadines and address the problems of the people of the Grenadines. You are the ministers of the respective ministries, come to the Grenadines and interface with the people about the problems that they are facing.

Mr. Speaker, education, an area which I love. I like to see young people excel. I also like to see persons, even though they are not young, they try to improve and advance themselves. Education is not only for the young, it is for everyone. As I was thought sometimes, people say I talk about her too often. But when you grow with someone and you were thought certain principles, then you must mention their names, my grandmother she always said, you learn something new every day. So education is not only for those who are presently in the preprimary, secondary, and college system, or at university. It is also for those who want to improve themselves, get a certificate and move on. Sometimes I have to talk to young people that when they older persons at lessons and they want to poke fun of them I say no, I hope that if you are not successful that you will

also have the same drive regardless of what age you reach, you would want to succeed, and we need such attention where the Grenadines is concerned.

Mr. Speaker, I have known two teachers who started the process in Canouan of offering their services to persons who wanted to upgrade, because you have a number of persons who are working at the resort, they may have two, three, four subjects but they want to improve. They may not have the English or the mathematics, or any subject for that matter, but they do not want to stay at that level, they want to move on. So we can also look at that. You also have persons who are working in Canouan who need that certificate, that skill certificate to show. And I am glad that one of the programmes that I saw in the Estimates dealing with using community centres and all those places, places where you can find in order to teach people a skill but more importantly to make sure that they are certified so that they will be able to compete for jobs regionally and also most importantly in their homeland. Mr. Speaker, that is very important.

Reading, Mr. Speaker, is a problem in our schools. A survey was done some years ago, in 12 pilot secondary schools, I believe, 12 schools were used, and it showed a high percentage of our students were not reading at grade 3 or below, and Mr. Speaker, it is a problem that we must address in our education system. On page 223 of the Estimates, the first one I would be dealing with, conduct training in reading methodology for all teachers of early years. The other is to introduce more programmes for struggling students at the primary level. And Mr. Speaker, this is very important especially at that level where we need to detect the reading problems that our students face, so we can address them so that when they get that opportunity to go to secondary school, they would be able to conquer and succeed at all cost. Mr. Speaker, the other one that says, disseminate graded reading materials for students in the lower forms of our secondary schools, because indeed we must address those who are in the system presently, who are having the problem of reading. We must address these areas. I am not sure, but I can be directed, I was looking for the funds as it relates to each of these programmes, I do not know how they would be handled, whether it is there but in trying to peruse the documents, because I came up sometime yesterday. [Interjection]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: They are recurrent projects. They are inside of the normal education, recurrent.

HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE: Okay Sir. So these are projects that I support wholeheartedly.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, if my honourable friend would give way. He would note that in my presentation, I have identified an additional department created in the ministry to address the question of national qualifications. And specifically in relation to the skills development, the Sector Skills Development Agency Act was passed last year. I am not so sure if you were in the House on that day. Yes. So we have set up that particular unit to facilitate the accreditation of persons. We are having a lot of training being done in continuing education particularly in practical skills and the agency which is being set up in the Ministry, this particular department is to facilitate CARICOM level qualifications the CVQs and also other levels of qualifications; so that we can be able to take advantage of the freedom of movement provisions, extant in the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas. So there is total policy direction in that area. And it

encompasses in the existing legislation and we have made it manifest in the budget and these institutions have now being created.

HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE: Mr. Speaker, within the Estimate...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Just a minute, you have ten minutes remaining.

HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE: Mr. Speaker, within the Estimates there is also a measure that I like. And which I had spoken to in this House time and time again. It is the issue of providing support to those who may not have the means to do so. Because, even just this term, I have had calls, again from parents living in Canouan, Mayreau, with students who are going to school on the mainland and they are faced with numerous problems and I know Honourable Minister of Education, I promised to come and sit with you and let you know all the problems that the students are being faced with. Because within one term a child may move two, three times.

The parents from the Grenadines know some of the problems they are being faced with. Some children told me that sometimes during the night they cannot do homework, if they live close to a streetlight that is where they have to go. The fridge are locked when they reach home so they cannot go there. And I know sometimes all the problems are not, we cannot put all the problems on where some of the children stay, they also may have adjustment problems. We need to look at the whole system in terms of adequately providing to the needs of the these students from the Grenadines, because every term, even from the first week of this term, there were calls, where Mr. Ollivierre, I have a problem, I cannot find, I was just told the people where my children are staying or my child is staying that they cannot accommodate them anymore. And the problems is not only unique to mainland St. Vincent but there is also that problem at Bequia and at Union island. Just two weeks ago one parent from Union Island was telling me, Mr. Ollivierre, the children, you may think they are from Canouan and they come to Union Island, they also have problems here. And there was one such problem, I would not say what it is but the Honourable Minister of Education she knows what it is. What happens sometimes to these children when they leave the comfort of their homes and have to stay in other places? There are numerous problems. And some of them are very serious problems. So we must look at our education system, how it caters to the people in the Grenadines, especially from Mayreau and Union Island and we must address those problems. Even those who leave Union Island coming to the mainland in terms of colleges and those things, they are older, they are better able to handle the situation but they too also have problems and some of these I would address further in the budgetary debate next week, Mr. Speaker.

So, as I said when I started before when I look at the Estimates, I look at the issues, the bread and butter issues that affect people's lives and what measures are here to take care of their needs and to me it has not gone far enough to address those issues. I am much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Further debate. I think I recognize the Minister of Education.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: ... on the Honourable Minister of Education. I not 100 percent and I sought to speak at this time, so that I can leave. I would be brief, no more than 15, 20 minutes, if I may be so permitted.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay, yes she would give way.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Thank you, very much. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I wish to begin by thanking the Honourable Minister of Education for permitting me this courtesy. Before I discuss the matter relating to the Estimates, Mr. Speaker, I again crave your indulgence to raise a matter which has been on my mind in this Honourable House for quite some time, and I think now is the most appropriate time to raise it. It has to do, Mr. Speaker, with some logistical issues in this Honourable House. We come here and we meet these containers filled with water and we rely on them for quenching our thirst. I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, I know in this country we have excellent tap water supply, but in these days, and I cast no aspersions whatsoever, let me begin by saying that, on the staff who work diligently in compiling these containers. However, Mr. Speaker, in an era where one has to be more and more concerned about health matters, my primary concern is the source of ice that is used in making the water cold. I want to suggest that a more viable option will be the use of bottled water to members of this Honourable House. I repeat, I am not in any way trying to cast aspersions on the persons who put these containers together but very often people feel that when you freeze water and turn it into ice it kills the germs, nothing is further from the truth. The source of ice wherever it comes from I do not know. But when I watch how people gather ice from time to time and add it to water, I get very concerned. I have a particular concern with my stomach that acts up from time to time and I am merely suggesting, Mr. Speaker, that members may wish to consider the use of bottled water. Given the environment inside here is fairly cool, you may not even have to chill it. It is quite good. There is of course, Mr. Speaker, I can give examples, Mountain Top, for example is a world class water supplier, that anybody would feel honoured to use, its quality cannot be challenged, [Interjections] I know of the process involved in the Mountain Top Springs, I cannot speak likewise for any other supplier. I am not purporting to say that there are not other top quality water suppliers, I am saying as a fact, I can testify to the exemplary quality of Mountain Top. That is by the way, Mr. Speaker, and I thank you for your indulgence.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Just to take the issue a little bit, I do not know, we have... I do not know if you would consider for the time being and we can probably work out the mechanics, we have installed a fountain very close by; I do not know if in the interim you may want to consider that as an area where you can use water from, just outside there. I do not know if you want to consider it. All right okay, continue.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Again, Mr. Speaker not to prolong it but the fountains themselves can even be worst unless the filters are regularly changed. And this is a simple fact, if you do not change the filters regularly, they accumulate the problem rather than solving it. But I gave my idea for what it is worth, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: All right. Okay. Thank you, very much.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Mr. Speaker, let me begin by looking at Roman numeral 1, the Financial Summary, which we see here, every year. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, in my briefest assignments, the preparation of a budget has been a critical component of any management tool. When I look at the snapshot of the budget which is the most critical, the national budget is the most important budget obviously in the country. There is a glaring absence of data with respect to actuals, there is nothing on this page that tells me how much was actually spent and how much was raised in either the previous year or any year before, and to me that is a grave, -- I am speaking of the summary, and it is an excellent tool for analyzing where goeth the budget exercise. Yes, one can go through the various ministries and see actuals in this case for 2009, because obviously it is almost impossible the calendar year coincide with the fiscal year, it is difficult to have any meaningful figures so soon. But, Mr. Speaker, all I am saying it would be an extremely useful exercise, if the last scholar of this page would have actuals for the year for which the information is available. It would lend tremendous assistance in comparing and analyzing and making sense out of the documents.

I want, Mr. Speaker, to look at the Ministries of Transport and Works, or however it is now newly formulated. It is difficult to keep track with the changes, Transport, Works, Urban Development and Local Government. Mr. Speaker, when I look at the indicators on page 408, 2011, result indicators and having listened to the Honourable Minister with responsibility for this portfolio, I am wondering whether there is in fact a disconnect between the people who prepare this document and the Honourable Minister himself. If you look for example, on the first such indicator, design and rehabilitate nine miles of leeward highway, from the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital to Layou, and achieve a 10% completion by December 2011. Mind you, for the same project in 2010, we were supposed to achieve a 60% completion. But the Minister indicated that in this year he is anticipating, well at least there are funds for consultancy work on the project and for some rehabilitative work, not for the project itself. The figure I remember is about \$0.5 million, rehabilitative work on the South Leeward Highway, that same component. The point is Mr. Speaker, these indicators speak to the actual rebuilding of highway, 10% to be completed by the end of the year.

Mr. Speaker, as you go along with the result indicators under this ministry which encompasses BRAGSA one gets the impression that there are no roads to be built in this country. It speaks of upgrading concrete roads, repairing, et cetera, et certera. Mr. Speaker, in the constituency of West Kingstown there are a number of people who still have to use all fours in order to get their place of abodes. There is a dire need for village roads to be built, so that people in Great House, Buddy Gutter, Ottley Hall, and even in parts of Campden Park can have access to their homes. I want to suggest that part of the work of this ministry include the construction of new roads, especially village roads, where there are not any; because the demand is overwhelming.

Mr. Speaker, during the budget debate God willing, I shall deal some more with matters related, but I want at this point in time to just deal on a matter as it relates to energy. I heard and I listened with interest, Mr. Speaker, to the Honourable Prime Minister's comments about operating in an office for some time without air condition systems. I also heard to my dismay that we are suddenly realizing how high the cost of energy and air conditioning is. Mr. Speaker, there are two aspects of this that need close attention. I have to agree 100% with the Honourable Prime Minister that far too many public buildings are not managed, they waste water, electricity, telephone and all other services. They waste them. No one derives benefits from the use of these services, specifically as it relates to energy, Mr. Speaker, I invite members to visit the headquarters of the

CWSA which was built in the 1990's and take a tour of the design and operation of that building. Additional investments were deliberately spent in insulating the roof, very carefully and properly, by using double glazed glass panes, by instituting air-conditioning systems that was at once central but at the same time specific. What do I mean? There are areas of buildings, the conference room, the cafeteria, the training area, that are used far less frequently than the rest of the building and so standalone air-conditioned units are installed in those. So that you have no need to air-condition the entire building when only a portion of it is in use. Moreover, the central air-conditioning system is set automatically to close off at 3 p.m. on regular work day because you can remain there after up to 6 o'clock and the building is still very cool. These may sound as simple measures, but we had compared and contrast the costs of running that building with similar buildings and at a time when the cost of energy continues to rise, the difference adds up. I am saying this, Mr. Speaker, to implore that even as we look to adjust the question of air-conditioning, we work closely with the energy unit and think about spending a little more money now to put systems in place that would reduce the consumption of energy and also to encourage all our people to understand that the waste of electricity is a drain on our foreign resource; because the hydroelectricity component is relatively small and we have to import fuel for most of our energy supplies.

Mr. Speaker, similarly, I would like to see an initiative to encourage the private sector perhaps in the form of incentives to use energy efficient systems in their own buildings as well, because, again, it is not VINLEC that is gaining, when people use unnecessary electricity, it is the country, that is losing, because we are simply pouring out of the country the hard capital. We have to buy the fuel in US dollars. So any attempt to encourage the private sector to reduce their consumption, accumulatively it would make a difference, and I am urging that with the proposed redevelopment of what was the accounting building next to the, what is now the Post Office that attempts be made to ensure that these kinds of measures are introduced. Even in the Customs Building that is to be restarted. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, we tend to deal with these matters when the horse is already bolted. I really would like us as a people to get into the process of planning and to involve all stakeholders in the decision-making process. Sometimes, in the implementation of projects we focus primarily on initial reduction in cost without taking a more holistic and long term approach. It is oftentimes much better to spend a little more upfront and to save on the maintenance and running cost down the road. It is evident that the cost of energy is not going to come down substantially anytime in the near future. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members I urge that the issue of the air-conditioning and associated problems be not treated as a mere bandage but we take the opportunity to save this country well in to the future. Mr. Speaker, I am obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, very much, Honourable Member, you are a man of your word. Honourable Minister of Education. Just a minute let me... okay when you are ready. When you are finished I will make an announcement on a matter. You go ahead.

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to give my wholehearted support the estimates for 2011. Mr. Speaker, I sat here today and I listened to all the comments that were made, but it was not only that I thought of the many hours that we sat together and deliberated before these figures were put on paper. Mr. Speaker, I also looked back at what we would have undergone in 2010, and I want to say hitherto hath the Lord blessed us. Mr. Speaker, I also think of a young man I taught as a little boy, in the Richland Park Government School, Edmund Jackson. He reasoned with us very well. He gave guidance as we

discussed. He spoke to us of prudential standards and at one point, this is what was said. We can only spend what we have.

Mr. Speaker, much wastage is going on in our many departments. And I go back again and I remember our own Prime Minister saying, we must get the small things right. These are hard economic times and on numerical 1 in the document before us, the estimates of 2011, the figure \$786.4 million estimated to be spent for 2011, the numbers were well thought of.

Mr. Speaker, Education. These I would say again and emphatically, these are exciting times in education. I would say again, I heard the word poor being spoken of today and I want to say, education is the surest way out of poverty.

Mr. Speaker, from time to time during the past five years, I have stood in this Honourable House and I have been speaking of programmes and activities in the Ministry of Education and we would all agree that there are many activities in the Ministry of Education that we cannot see with the naked eye, but activities are going on in our educational institutions throughout St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

I would like at this point to speak of a promise that was made to our graduate teachers and that 65 of these graduate teachers in the primary schools they would have been appointed and recently. There are many more but with time, we do not have all the monies in hand that we would need to do all that we want to do and so this is life and we must take time to do what we have to do if we must get it right.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Maybe, if the lawyers pay a little more taxes we would have more.

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: Mr. Speaker, I mentioned the 65 graduates to say that training is important and we have been training all along. Mr. Speaker, we cannot expect to give that which he or she does not have. And we remember this in education. If we can turn in the document before us to page 597, in the capital estimates just for guidance, 596 and 597, to expand ICT facilities, the St. Vincent Teachers' College and improve education management and just below to date facilities at various educational institutions, Kingstown Anglican, South Rivers Methodist, Questelles Government, New Grounds Primary School, in the remark section on your right hand, Langley Park Government, we are upgrading and expanding and making sure that our educational institutions that they are fit for our children to sit in and learn.

We continue with the Book Loan Scheme and on page 596 we an amount of \$1 million. We also looked at the continuation of technical and vocational educational projects and there again is another \$1 million on page 596.

Mr. Speaker, a wonderful facility has been built in Georgetown and if we look to page 248, we will see the caption Special Education. Mr. Speaker, we have been saying from time to time let no child be left behind, regardless of whether that child can walk or cannot walk, if I must put it simply, but we are looking after everyone. And so that wonderful facility has been built, and the programme provides for staffing and operations of all schools for children with special needs, in Kingstown, in Georgetown and in Bequia, and the

total population of these schools was 103 as of September 2009. I can give that part. And if you look you can see that staff has been provided for them. On page 248 I want to show you how serious we are in the Ministry of Education, in that in the approved estimates for 2010, you had \$15,000.00 but for 2011, you have \$40,000. Wonderful, wonderful project for our children and our people who are specially challenged.

Now on page 271 we look here and we something that is new. I have given what we are continuing and now I am looking at that which is new. And we are talking about education and consolidating the work that we would have been doing and it is captioned, Education Research, Information and Communication Technology department. This is to integrate ICT into curriculum delivery. We must integrate for proper delivery, because we are equipping our children for tomorrow. We have an information technology unit in the Ministry of Education. We have a reprographic unit and both are responsible for networking, installation of software, repairs and maintenance of ICT equipment. We have institutions that we have started with in the early childhood centres, we have our 125 early childhood centres to look at. We have 69 primary schools, 26 secondary schools and our 3 multipurpose centres.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members the work in the Ministry of Education is not easy but together we are going to make it. On page 273 we have the national qualification department, it was just recently the bill was brought to this House and passed. Mr. Speaker, we have to be serious about what we are doing to achieve and maintain quality assurance, bearers of certificate will be able to move freely within CARICOM as mandated by the CARICOM heads of government and this was said when the bill was debated. Mr. Speaker, the Sector Skills Development Agency or the SSBA, will provide the legislative framework for the agency and we did say that just recently. It was provided a policy to guide the practices in TECHVOC education sector and this will develop as time goes on.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members a lot of work is being done and in 2011 we have 76 secondary school students to be certified. We have 67 resident Technical Vocational persons to obtain their Caribbean Vocational qualification certificates and I am pleased today, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, to speak of the skilled areas that our children are being trained in. We do data operations, we do housekeeping, we do food and beverage, we do food preparation, front office training. We do plumbing, we do electrical installation. We do auto mechanics, we do furniture manufacturing, welding and carpentry. It was just recently that some of this was shown on the television, so that our people can know exactly what we are doing.

Mr. Speaker, I am very happy that as we sat and we discussed about the monies that we have to spend that we as a ministry we have promised to do our best. In the Ministry of Education we have asked that if an officer is not going to be in the office that the air-conditioned unit be turned off. We have asked that the lights be turned off, that we take proper care of the facilities. These are hard economic times and I do not want the Education Revolution to fail. I know the parents do not want it to fail, the teachers do not want it to fail, but there is always a right way of doing our work.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, as times go on and later on in the estimates, I will say something more about the programmes that are being done in education. But for today what I have done, I have spoken of

programmes that are to continue and the new ones that have been added in order to strengthen the Education Revolution. Mr. Speaker, I am much obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Senator Baptiste. Before you speak let me. Just a minute. Since its our intention it is to go along with debate on the estimates as late as we can and we have not provided the regular snack break. We have set up a refreshment table outside, so members at their convenience and without disrupting the attendance here at the Parliament can go have a little break, a little refreshment at times, because we want to complete this process tonight. So that is it. Honourable Senator.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: May I ask if the cameraman can operate his camera in a way, I would love to see the wonderful countenance of my senatorial friend as it is at the moment. Thank you.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Except that he is inconveniencing me now. Go ahead, go ahead, it is all right, I would look at the monitor.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I rather be inconvenienced than the Honourable Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: No. I would look at the monitor, it is all right, you go ahead.

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members of this Honourable House, I rise to make my contribution to the debate on the 2011 Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure and Revenue. Let me first of all, with your permission, Mr. Speaker, say how grateful I am to God first, and also to the Honourable Opposition Leader for having given consideration to me in nominating me and of course to His Excellency the Governor General for appointing me to this honourable position. I take it very seriously, having been given the chance to serve the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines as a Senator in this Honourable House, and I consider this exercise to be a very important one, from which I can learn and look forward to continue to learn as I sojourn here in this Honourable House.

Now, I wish to begin my presentation by reflecting just briefly on what happened to members on this side of the House with respect to the time we got the Estimates. I acknowledge that the Honourable Member from North Central Windward, the Honourable Prime Minister expressed regret that we got later than usual, but I just wish to put it on record that I saw it as a very unfortunate thing that even up to Monday afternoon when it was possible for us to have it, because we were advised that it was actually at the Clerk's Office, we had to wait until the following morning due to the fact that we understood the Honourable Attorney General wanted to make certain additional documents in this case the bills, that are also on the Order Paper available to us. And I felt that, Mr. Speaker, those few hours Mr. Speaker, between Monday afternoon and Tuesday morning could have made a lot of difference in the time that was needed, and is in fact needed for any person in the Honourable House and indeed any new person especially on the Opposition side; the time that would be needed to study such an important document of six hundred and something pages and recognizing how important the work itself is and the study thereof ought not to be entered into haste and rush. So I just want to put on record

that I would like to see better done in the future. Now, I know some may say in the past they had it hard but the fact is, the government is promising to do better and I know they boast of their standard also, so I believe we could have at least had them the Monday afternoon as opposed to the Tuesday morning, Mr. Speaker.

Now, as I look at the financial summary page, Roman numeral 1 or (i), I wish to just go over briefly, just a certain aspect of it, which the Honourable Opposition Leader dealt with in the early part of our debate today. Because I recognize when another Honourable Member spoke to the issue of deficit, I recognize in my own mind that I could not appreciate what he was saying because in my own study I understand and it is really plain from the way the financial summary is laid out that even though you count the current deficit by looking at the current expenditure of \$532 million and comparing it with current revenue of \$504 million and really and truly okay it is \$27 million; even if you do that, Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is we have to pay amortization or the principal on the debt and we have to pay the cash for the sinking fund contribution. We have to put it aside and my understanding is that those amounts which amount to \$77 million plus will have to come from our current revenue; therefore, if I really want, if the people really want to know the true deficit, we must take into consideration the \$77 million that comes from amortization and the sinking fund contribution and that is why we hold, and I agree, and I hold to the point that we are looking at a total deficit, meaning current expenditure and the cash deficit. We are looking at a total of \$105 million and not just the \$27 million as some would have it passed off.

Having established that, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I also find the point made by the Honourable Opposition Leader earlier with respect to the fact that for the second time or maybe for the third time I believe he said, we are observing a decrease in the provisions made for goods and services in the 2011 estimates. We observed that \$75 million for 2011 as opposed to \$77 almost \$78 million in 2010, is being allocated. This decrease will impact upon the ability of the various ministries and departments of the government.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Will my Honourable Friend give way let me just explain the matter. I am not going to raise the issue of... I will explain the small decrease between 2010 and 2011. But the reason why there was a more substantial decrease between 2009 and 2010 and in the year 2008 and 2009, because a number of items which were listed as goods and services in the Central Government accounts for institutions such as BRAGSA and the Community College are now in grants and contributions; so that you are not comparing like and like. And the Tourism Authority likewise. So I want to make that point. So that you will have to, in order to get a true picture, you will have to see the extent of what goes in to those statutory enterprises for goods and services as part of the grants and contributions to them. I will give an explanation later in respect of the difference between 2010 and 2011, but I was talking about the point which you made in respect of the Leader of the Opposition for the preceding two years.

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE: Thank you for that clarification, Honourable Prime Minister, however I maintain that issue is that we have a decrease this year and we even apart from the Community College, the Tourism Authority, BRAGSA, we still have what? About 12 ministries? We still have various departments who will be affected significantly. That is the point I want to establish; their ability, their capacity to carry out, their programmes, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, will be significantly impacted by a decrease in goods and services, and...

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: May I just say this; just to point out that one of the important contributors in goods and services is the provision of electricity services, communication expenses, telephones and the like. And one of the issues which I pointed out and which I would explain later has to do with an attempt to make savings in a number of those particular areas, so it does not necessarily mean that in other matters for goods and services. I am not going to... I am not saying that you must not come to the conclusion which you wish to come to, I was only looking at the factual matrix. That is all.

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE: Again, if the ministry cannot pay its telephone bills, if it cannot pay its electricity bills, is there a problem just with the functioning of the department? How is it going to effectively carry out its programmes. I am saying while I understand and appreciate your pointing out some aspects of goods and services that are involved, I am saying that they are critical to the department's functioning and as a result to the department's ability in one way or the other to carry out its programmes. And hence when I observed, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, that this area has decreased this year, I am concerned about the impact it will have upon the ministries generally in terms of their functioning which may affect their ability to carry out their programmes successfully. This is what I am trying to establish.

Now, this is my introduction Mr. Speaker, to looking at certain areas under the Ministry of National Mobilization, Family Affairs, Gender Affairs et cetera. And I wish to point the attention of Honourable Members and of you, Mr. Speaker, I would be between the pages 173 and 211, which outlines the Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure 2011 for this ministry's programme, that is the Ministry of National Mobilization, Page 173 to page 211. When we look Mr. Speaker, when we look at this ministry, I consider it to be a very important one, when I consider its Mission Statement for example we are told it is:

“To engage in social transformation through social empowerment, social protection and social justice, using National Mobilization, Social Development, Youth and Sports.

It is no surprise therefore with all the mention of social development and social empowerment that we find programmes such as Family Affairs Division, Gender Affairs, Liberty Lodge Training Centre, Home Help for the Elderly, Crisis Centre; it is no surprise that we find such programmes that deal directly with providing help and assistance to sectors of our society that may be considered weak and needing aid and needing rehabilitation and needing support to be able to make a contribution to the society and just to even save them, for example in the case of the Crisis Centre which I speak about shortly. So when I consider this ministry I count it to be a very important one. When I look at it in a broad sense, Mr. Speaker, when I look at the 2011 Estimates for this Ministry, I see that, \$29,262,000.00 has been allocated to be spent in the programmes of this Ministry for 2011. That figure represents broadly about 4.7% of the total recurrent estimate. In other words, 4.7 cents of every dollar spent on the programmes in the Ministry of Social Development, sorry, 4.7 cents of every dollar spent on all the ministries in the entire recurrent estimates goes to the Ministry of National Mobilization. I make note of that. And I want to just look at certain programmes and show how much of the dollar that goes to the entire ministry is being allocated to these programmes. And then to look at some of the expenditure in these programmes and try to understand and try to help us understand what is really going on here.

Take for example, the Crisis Centre; this programme is outlined on page, let me just find it, Mr. Speaker, it is outlined in page 206 and 207, but before I go there in detailed, I observed that programme 314, the Crisis Centre, we are allocating this year, the government is allocating this year \$192,000.00 down from \$288,000.00 in 2010. That that \$192,000.00 for the Crisis Centre, Mr. Speaker, represents 0.6 cents of every dollar that will be spent on the Ministry of Social Development and I think it is significant and I will explain why shortly.

If you look at the Gender Affairs, programme 309, \$233,000.00 for recurrent expenditure for 2011, that represents 0.79 cents or 0.8 cents of the dollar that goes to the entire Ministry. The Liberty Lodge Training Centre Programme 310, \$709,000.00, for this programme for 2011, down from \$735,000.00 in 2010, and that figure \$709,000.00 represents 2.4% or 2.4 cents of every dollar spent in the whole of the Ministry. When we get to the Home Help for the Elderly Programme, a very important programme too that deals with providing urgent and genuine assistance to all elderly poor. We observe that this programme, the allocation in the 2011 Estimates has also decreased from \$1,098,000.00 to \$1,017,000.00 and this programme accounts for 3.5 cents of every dollar that would be spent in the Ministry of Social Development, National Mobilization. Family Affairs is the biggest, \$18 million and that is 64 cents there about of every dollar that would be spent in this Ministry, will go to the Family Affairs Division.

Now I did it like this first, Mr. Speaker, because I wanted to give a sort of very down to earth view of what is really happening in the Ministry. If we take them one by one starting with the Crisis Centre on page 206 and 207, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, this programme as I said, 0.6 cents and Mr. Speaker, the average man cannot see 0.6 cents because the smallest unit we have is 1 cent, but essentially 0.6 cents of every dollar spent in Ministry of Social Development goes to the Crisis Centre and what is this Crisis Centre? I want to say something about it. Its main objective according to page 207 is:

- (1) To provide short-term assistance to victims of domestic violence and their children and safe and comfortable and supportive environment.**
- (2) To utilize counselling, theological and other forms of support services to victims and to eventually rehabilitate victims and**
- (3) To provide protection through secure temporary housing and supporting legislation to victims of abuse.**

It is a very important programme, because we are dealing with our women and children who have been victims of domestic violence and abuse and who need a place of refuge and who need a place where they can be healed and reformed and rehabilitated. This programme was boasted about, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, by the Honourable Prime Minister in the 2010 Estimate Debate. I refer to the Hansard, he said and he was speaking about the Crisis Centre as a new programme and in speaking of it, he referred to the Crisis Centre, Mr. Speaker, please allow me to quote and he said:

Second of these new programmes, programme 314, the Crisis Centre, Ministry of National Mobilization, the objective of this programme is to provide support to victims of domestic violence in the form of short-term shelter, counselling and other assistance. See pages 172 to page 173.

Are we so poor, are things so tight that we cannot put a programme this year in place for our victims of domestic violence to get short-term shelter, counselling and other assistance? Guess some people would say I must not do that. Well, that is the choice the people of this country will have to face in this budget as we go forward in this election”.

And I say, Mr. Speaker, very good. Very good choice that even though things were tight and even though things were hard we saw the need for a Crisis Centre for our women and children who have suffered the effects of domestic violence but what is happening now with this Crisis Centre, this is what I want to ask and look at. Because what I have observed is that the allocation is cut for 2011. It is cut by about... I do not have the figures right now in my head, but has gone from \$288,000.00 to \$192,000.00. If you look at the result indicators for this programme you will note, Mr. Speaker, that in 2009, if you go back in the 2010 Estimate, in 2009, a promise was made to have an operational manual in place.

The result indicator for 2009 showed that that had been achieved. Then when you look at the result indicator for 2010, it said that they would operationalize the Crisis Centre by September 2010. Alas, September 2010 has come and gone and according to the result indicators the Crisis Centre is still not operational. So our women and children of domestic violence have been made to wait another year for a place of refuge, healing and rehabilitation. And why? I am trying to look at the figures to understand it, and I cannot see. All the result indicators said was that it had been partially furnished but not operationalized and it went on to say,... let me point you to the exact page, Mr. Speaker, just so you see I am telling the truth. Page 184, sorry that is the result indicator for 2011, but the one for 2010 in terms of the status update, stated plainly on page 176, the fifth indicator on page 176 the aim was to operationalize the Crisis Centre by September 30th, 2010, however the status update says that the centre is still not operational, it is partially furnished and equipped and is awaiting staffing to be put in place to commence operation in 2011. And then for 2011 we are promised that all operations manual and established stakeholders and protocols will be done by March 31st 2011.

My concern is if we are going to complete the furnishing and bringing to full operation the Crisis Centre in 2011, why is the budget cut? Why I am seeing, for example, a cut in personal emoluments which is salaries for staff and why I am seeing, for example, that there are four staff positions but no securities personnel? This is a centre that is supposed to provide, Mr. Speaker, among other things, protection through secure housing. We cannot run a Crisis Centre for battered women and children without security personnel, and at a 24/7 basis because, think about the women who flee literally, get there, and an enraged unfortunate spouse or partner comes looking. There must be security provisions in the staffing. These are the kinds of things I will like to see because I think it is a very good programme but if we are not thinking carefully and clearly about what it ought to do and how it will be able to do so, and if we are not allocating the right amount of funds and so on, then it stands to fail even before it gets off the ground.

Mr. Speaker, I want to move quickly to another programme under this Ministry that is the Home Help for the Elderly programme. That is programme 311 whose detail may be found on pages 196 and 197 of the Estimates. Now, the Home Help for the Elderly programme is another crucial programme in my opinion, Mr. Speaker. Its main objective is to provide urgent and meaningful care to the elderly poor. Listen to those words, Mr. Speaker, urgent and meaningful care.

Now, here we have a programme whose objectives are essentially to help the poor, the elderly poor. We talk a lot about having the poor's interest at heart and loving the poor et cetera. In this Ministry, the recurrent expenditure allocated to this programme has been cut from \$1,098,000.00 to \$1,017,000.00 that is about \$81,000.00 cut, Mr. Speaker, to the Home Help for the Elderly Programme. I ask the question is there such a decrease in the elderly poor population who needs home help that justifies a cut of over \$80,000.00, Mr. Speaker, for 2011. Is there some other source of income to sustain it by an additional \$80,000.00, as was required in 2010? What we are seeing here, Mr. Speaker, you say an increase of deficit but the picture is right there before me on page 196 that you have cut the budget. So do not tell me increase of deficit and the figure is showing less. You giving it less than what was there in 2010. [Interjection] The point is... no, I only said you said, and I shall not be distracted, Mr. Speaker, now what we observed where cuts come, the cuts come in wages and the cuts come in training, Mr. Speaker, look under the programme on 196, you will see they are proposing to cut the wage allocation from \$986,000.00 to \$950,000.00 that is a cut of \$37,000.00, wages. And we are proposing to cut the training from \$55,000.00 to \$10,000.00, Mr. Speaker. Now, Mr. Speaker, the Home Help for the Elderly programme is carried by home help care providers, so these people have to be paid and they also have to be trained and I will prove to you, Mr. Speaker, how that in the result indicators promises are made to train more home help care providers yet we are cutting the training budget by \$45,000.00, Mr. Speaker. [Interruptions]

I refer, Mr. Speaker, to the result indicators. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that from time to time there would be cross talk, but I would really like an opportunity to hear myself in a certain way as I make these points. And I appeal to your good judgment, Mr. Speaker in that regard to assist.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I talk about the result indicators concerning home help...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, just a minute. Honourable Senator...

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I realize this is your first real meaningful debate in Parliament, and you would probably get accustomed to this cross talk, it transcends both sides of the House. I guess you would get accustomed to it. In the meanwhile, members perhaps you might just be making her a little bit nervous, let us not have this.

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And as I said Mr. Speaker, I appreciate it would happen but when so loud that you kind of cannot hear yourself, you know, that is the time when I appeal to your good judgment, Mr. Speaker, and I thank you.

Now, Home Help for the Elderly programme in the 2010 estimates, Mr. Speaker, the one of the aims concerning this programme was to train and employ and it is on page 177, train and employ at least 15 home help providers or assistants by July 31st 2010; at page 177, and it is the third to last result indicator, train and employ at least 15 home help providers/assistants by July 31st, 2010. The status update tells us, that this was not achieved but will

be pursued in 2011. So we are told that at least 15 home help care providers, the plan was to train and employ, so training and wages, they were not trained, they were not employed, but they would do it in 2011.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, on page 184, we are told of a plan under Home Help for the Elderly Programme, page 184, we are advised that there is plan and object to train and facilitate the employment of a further 30 home help care providers by August 31st 2011.

I am trying to make sense Mr. Speaker, of what I am seeing in the Estimates, because, if they are telling me, that you are now going to train 30 plus the 15 you did not train in 2010 that is 45 in total, if you tell me that you are now going to train 45, but you cut the budget to \$10,000.00 for training but to train 15 at least 15 in 2010, you had a training budget of \$55,000.00, Mr. Speaker, that does not make sense to me. And I am simply saying that I am concerned because I appreciate to some extent because I have not really been personally involved but I could appreciate that taking care of the elderly poor, it is a taxing job, it is a unique job, it requires people who are dedicated and so on and if you are cutting training and employment of the numbers of persons, it stands to impact negatively on your objectives in carrying out this programme effectively. And if you are cutting their wages too, it also stands to affect the quality because as you know, Mr. Speaker, employees need to be paid well to be motivated as an incentive and so on. Okay, Mr. Speaker, so this is my concern where this programme is concerned; as I said I have no problems with the programme in itself. In fact, the members on this side House and this party in this side of the House supports the home help for the elderly programme, and this is why, [Interjection] I had taken the pain to...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Central Kingstown do not start a riot, please.

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPISTE: And this is why, Mr. Speaker, I had taken the pains to make the kind of detailed observations I made about this programme, because I know that we are concerned about it.

Mr. Speaker, I am moving quickly along, I want to point out a few things about the Liberty Lodge Training Centre programme, programme No. 310 on pages 200 and 201. The Liberty Lodge Training Centre, Mr. Speaker, is another very important institution and programme under the Ministry of Social Development which seeks to address the needs of some of truant, you know the young men who gets themselves in trouble, having difficulty at home and so on, we care about them and we happy for such an institution and where government can assist such an institution to be run and so on, that is very good. But I have observed however, Mr. Speaker, is that there are decreases in personal emoluments in supplies and materials and in this case I really just want, I am seeking clarification because I have observed for example on page 201, Mr. Speaker, that in the case of the Clerk/Typist, the salary jumps from \$20,000.00 for 2010 to \$7,900.00 and I was wondering if there could be some clarifications because I wonder perhaps if it is an indication that the person would only be paid for a portion of the year or what. But I found it to be a significant decrease and I just wanted some clarification there. I also on a more lighter note, wish to point out an error, the total salaries is listed at \$519,128.00 on page 201 but on page 200 it says \$517,128.00, I believe it is a typographical error. I just want to point it out, to you, Mr. Speaker, and the Honourable Minister of Social Development.

Okay, having said that, Mr. Speaker, when I consider the result indicators under this programme I am concerned what appears to be in some cases their failure to follow certain standards that result indicators should follow,

and I observed it with other programmes, like the family affairs programme and the gender affairs programmes. What do I mean by that?

A certain individual with whom I was discussing while preparing, reminded me that objectives and result indicators ought to be S-M-A-R-T, that is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound, or having a certain time limit to them, and when I look at some of the indicators that pertain to the Liberty Lodge Training Centre for example and others, I had a lot of questions, for example, on page 177, we see in the last two indicators, okay, it says empower ten parents of resident boys through family and business counselling and other awareness programmes by December 2010, and the status update tells us this was achieved. It identified how many parents were to be targeted, but I question about the assessment of their experience to determine whether they were empowered. And then below it says expose resident boys, it did not say how many, so I am assuming it is the whole population, expose resident boys of the Liberty Lodge Boys Training Centre to opportunities through apprentice and job attachments by December, 2010 and again we were told that this was achieved. But is it that all the boys in the training centre found job attachments and apprenticeship programmes, what were the skills that they achieved from this, we are talking about a centre that should have an objective also to rehabilitate them, because that is one of the result indicators for 2011, to get them to be reintegrated back into their families and society, not just have them constantly in this centre where they are seen as continually problem children, but where they... well I am saying, I do not know from the way this result indicator is crafted or drafted how many of those boys actually got job attachments, what were the skills that they achieved, and whether or not in truth and in fact, when you say this was achieved what does that really mean. That is what I am asking, Mr. Speaker. And I think it is important for us to ask these things, because we are entrusted in the quality and true success of these programmes and that is what I am saying.

Mr. Speaker, I have promised myself that I would not develop or start a habit of asking you how much time I have left, but the truth is I was not looking at my clock; so I would appreciate your assistance in that regard.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: You have ten minutes remaining.

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE: Ten minutes remaining.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: 11 minutes.

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also wish to take a brief look at the gender affairs programme and particularly at the result indicators for this programme, for the mere fact that I find it to be very, I find it to reflect a lot or to expose a lot with respect to the concern I have about result indicators not being specific enough, and not giving us a true idea of what really has been done. You see it is so important, Mr. Speaker, that this happens because remember we are trying to justify the figures that were allocated to the programme, so when you say in your result indicators that you want to do this, you look at the amount of money that has been allocated to the programme to see whether or not you will achieve it, if in your status update you come back and you say, you did not do it but you promised to do something else bigger than that the next year, we look to see if the estimates are going to cut you down from doing what you did not do and doing more, so they are linked, so when I hear some people perhaps thinking that it is not necessary to go

through the result indicators and that is more for the budget debate, I say no, because it is directly linked to the Estimates, directly to the figures. It is in the Estimates, it is in the book. I did not say anybody said so.

Page 198 and 199, gender affairs, I want to think, Mr. Speaker, that the kinds of responses I am getting here in my maiden experience is reflective of an indication that I am really touching on some very important and key issues in this Honourable House. Page 198, page 199 gender affairs programme Mr. Speaker, I observe Mr. Speaker, that after the Crisis Centre it is the smallest and in this case the second smallest allocation, \$233,000.00 in the Ministry of Social Development that is, \$233,000.00 for 2011, it is a slight increase from the approved estimates in 2010 but I want to point out some things about the result indicators that make me concern about the potential of success in this area.

Mr. Speaker, let me say by the way, as someone who worked in a department of government before, I really appreciate that staff members have a lot of challenges and I want to just to say I commend public servants generally for the work that they do sometimes under the kind of measure. Sometimes they do not get what they want, they do not get the kind of figures that they would like to see to carry out their programmes effectively, and so they do their work under certain constraints and I think they ought to be commended, it is the government whom I am addressing however, through you, Mr. Speaker, when I point out the concerns and weaknesses and so on because they have the ability to do something different; to help the public servants do their job even better.

On page 184 and on page 176 Mr. Speaker you will find some result indicators relative to the gender affairs programme. Page 184 for example, I rather look at page 176 first because that is the indicators and the status updates from 2010, take for example the result indicator which seeks to implement at least five training programmes for rural young women in 30 communities to develop socioeconomic skills to meet the needs of a changing environment by December 2010. It does not tell us how many women are targeted. It tells us five training programmes, in 30 communities but we do not know how many women are targeted. The status update says funding is committed by the Basic Need Trust Fund and the project will continue in 2011, so the indication is that it has started however how many women are really targeted and how many will benefit. We need the result indicators to be more specific. I Mr. Speaker, had to learn that as a public servant, you know, I got things coming back to me, I am not afraid to admit it where it says, well it needs to be more specific, targeted numbers, date, et cetera. So I am just putting this out there because this is the only way we are going to be able to effectively assess, Mr. Speaker whether or not we have performed and whether or not we have been successful in the programmes and whether or not the estimated amount have been properly spent. So it is very important that we look at these, what might seem to be simple but important details.

Take another result indicator, and I know my time is winding up, Mr. Speaker, look at, for example, [interjection] thank you, and I hope Mr. Speaker agrees; look at the third to last indicator on that same page, Mr. Speaker, page 176 work with women's groups or clubs to further reenergize/develop the national women's organisation by December 2010. And then the status update says, National Council of Women has been activated, the Ministry will continue to work with other groups in providing training and capacity building.

Now, the National Council of Women ought to be a body made up of members and representatives of various women's groups. But in the result indicator it did not indicate or it did not say, it did not give a target of how many women's groups, it did not even say in the status update if women's groups actually came on board. It just said the National Council of Women have been activated, that could mean just a board of people put together to make up the National Council of Women; how do we really know that the women's groups throughout our communities are being reached, and will now benefit from such a national umbrella organisation. This is important, Mr. Speaker, because if we are going to sustain and assist financially through the estimated amount allocated to this programme, if we are going to financial assist these groups and this organisation we want to know for sure that the money is reaching the people and the groups that they are targeting. Very important. And then Mr. Speaker, in the 2011 indicators under the same programme we have indicators too that I consider not to be measurable as they should be, for example, on page 184, the third indicator under gender affairs says, continue to develop and administer career orientation programmes for teen parents during school vacations by August 31st 2011. Mr. Speaker, how many career orientation programmes, how many teen parents will benefit. We need to... you can indicate, it is indicator you said, you can give an idea of how many you are targeting, so you can look at the figures allocated to the programme and see if they are adequate and so on. Mr. Speaker, this is very important for our own assessment, even the persons working in the department, their own assessment of how well, or not they are doing, and for us to really see if we need to put more money here or not et cetera.

So I am saying these things need to be looked at when we are preparing the estimates. We need to pay more attention to them and I am sure all the Honourable Members of this House would appreciate what I am saying, because even if you are on the government side, you have to learn that when you are working in government departments you have to learn those principles when you are preparing budgets, if you are in a senior position and you have to do this work. So this is not just a mere criticism from the opposition side, this is a beneficial thing towards the proper functioning of the people's government, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, my time is almost up, but I want to make mention of something to do with ecclesiastical affairs. I observed for the last few years that ecclesiastical affairs features in the name of a ministry but there is no real money programme per se call ecclesiastical affairs and I observed that in the result indicators there are some indicators that were not achieved and I am curious as to why this was not the case because they were repeated at least in two years. I speak with specific reference to the Ministry of National Reconciliation, that is the ministry now, which houses ecclesiastical affairs, yes I have it here, Mr. Speaker, page 103, well I realize from the updated information we received this morning, that a mission statement has now been inserted, because I had made note of the fact that this ministry did not have a mission statement, in the documents we received, the estimates we received on Tuesday, there is a mission statement there and I am a little bit disappointed about it, because when I compare mission statements of a previous ministry under which ecclesiastical affairs fell it at least hinted to work of ecclesiastical affairs by referring to the promotion of spiritual well-being, but in this new mission statement, for me it does not tell me what the programmes are about; it says that this ministry will carry out the policies pertaining to these programmes, but it does not really give you an idea as what the programmes themselves are about. As opposed to the former mission statement which had a statement concerning the promotion or encouraging of spiritual well-being, which I think is a good thing for a government to do.

But what I want to observe specifically about ecclesiastical affairs, Mr. Speaker, is this, in the 2010 estimates, the result indicators said, that the ministry, dealing with ecclesiastical affairs will do three things, 1. Work with the AG's Office for further amendment of the Marriage Act, 2. Work with AG's Office to enact regulations to the Marriage Act, and 3. Establish an Appeal's committee for review of rejected applications for Marriage Officers License at the ministerial level. In 2010, we were told those objectives were not achieved, and in 2011 in the Estimate document of 2011, I note specifically, Mr. Speaker, that they are not even mentioned and given a status update, they just simply disappear from the list of result indicators and status update in the 2011 estimate document but for 2011 they now indicate back the same three indicators, almost as if they are new, but it is really the same things that were repeated before and never got done. I hope this time, Mr. Speaker, they will be done.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE: This is where I end my presentation and I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your time and Honourable Members.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Central Kingstown, the Senator is still on her feet.

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE: I was just ending, Mr. Speaker, by saying thank you. And I just want to say that these are my concerns and I hope that the government could look into those things because it is for the benefit of all of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, very much. Now, I recognize you Honourable Member for Central Kingstown. Honourable Senator you can begin now.

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: Thank you, very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to make my contribution to this Estimates debate for 2011. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, today we listened to a tired and lack of usual confidence Minister of Finance, present without his usual robustness and ebullience the estimates for 2011. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Prime Minister tendered among explanations two excuses that caught my own attention. The first, Mr. Speaker, in explaining the reduced estimates was what he defined as a need for balance and prudence and enterprise. Mr. Speaker, interestingly on that note of prudence and enterprise the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister herself emphasize that it was the Budget Director who brought to their attention of the Cabinet, that perhaps this year more than ever there is a responsibility to attend to prudential standards, in fact, she went on to add that he advised "we can only spend what we have", and that is clearly a truism. Mr. Speaker, the corollary of that which I do not think the Budget Director spoke about is also true, and I think that is what is reflective here in our 2011 estimates, you cannot spend what you do not have. And I trust that that lesson is not lost, not just that you can only spend what you have, but you cannot spend what you do not have, and I suspect, Mr. Speaker, that explained much of the concerns raised this evening so eloquently in her maiden address by Senator Anesia Baptiste; you cannot spend what you do not have. The government has adopted a position, these are my interpretations, Mr. Speaker, to cut and contrive.

Mr. Speaker, the second observation I took on board from the Prime Minister's Address and I put it in my own language is that we need to constrain ourselves in our estimates for 2011 and I believe, Mr. Speaker, this is why he referred to the removal of what he defined as some of the big ticket items in the capital expenditure of 2010. Mr. Speaker, while on that note, and I am sure the Honourable Prime minister would be prepared to offer explanations, I think he cited that the \$19 million that had been budgeted for or provisioned in 2010 for coast guard services that we were relieved of that responsibility this year thanks to the Obama Administration coming "to the rescue" of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and therefore we would not have to find that \$19 million resources which was supposed to be done through the various financial schemes, hire purchase, et cetera, et cetera, but in any event my understanding is that St. Vincent and the Grenadines would have had to find those monies.

Mr. Speaker, when one looks at the Capital Estimates for the Ministry of National Security, we see that the same provisions is there for two coast guard vessel in 2011 and I assume it is the replacement for the two that we had there for 2010, the budgetary provision is for \$2.5 million in this year and there is a provision as well for construction of work in Canouan I think it is for the coast guard base. But \$2 million, Mr. Speaker, and it says to purchase coast guard vessels for interception, it is a long way from the \$19 million that had been identified in 2010. And one wonders what is the logical explanation; whether we are talking oranges for oranges or limes for limes. If it is the same quality of coast guard vessels that would have cost \$19 million that are now down to \$2 million, one year later.

Mr. Speaker, I pause a little bit on that intervention, from the United States of America to which we are most grateful, because my observation is that that intervention is also led to us seeing on the books the word USA which we had not seen last year or a little while. Whether that represents an about face of the government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines that we will now do military business, or business period with the United States of America, and we are not constrained to any conflicts in foreign policy, I do not know. This debate perhaps is not the appropriate place, but the observation is made in passing.

HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER: I rise on a point of order.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Senator, state your point of order.

HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER: 33 (9) The Honourable Member is reading his presentation.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. He is reading? I did not observe it, but if you are...

HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER: I observed that he was reading.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I did not observe he was reading but if you are...

HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER: Very copious notes I must say.

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: Mr. Speaker, this is a problem that the Honourable Senator has had for some time, my fluency, I am quite prepared to make my notes available to him. In fact, he can hold the text if he wants and I would speak here for the next 45 minutes without notes. I invite you to.

Let him come across, I want him to come across the floor.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member please continue.

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: Mr. Speaker, we move on. I want to go back Mr. Speaker to something that a number of colleagues have done today and each time it has been done it is not only been a reinforcement but the emphasis brings home to the public of St. Vincent and the Grenadines what we are really dealing with, and in a sense it assists again Honourable Senator Baptiste with some of her consternations and concerns in that brilliant address she had earlier today. Mr. Speaker, in the financial summary as we were shown by the Honourable Leader we had a problem with our recurrent budget. We have a provision of \$532 million to take care of wages and salaries, pensions, transfers, interest payments and goods and services \$532 million. But we can only raise \$504 million from tax revenue and from non-tax revenue. So straight off the bat, Mr. Speaker, we know the dance cannot pay for the light. So we have to come to grips with this, the dance cannot pay for the light. And for the people at home who are listening to us to understand, whether we want to get into semantics as to what is current expenditure or what cash expenditure, we are still short of another \$77 million to pay a must do commitment namely for amortization and sinking fund, so we are \$77 plus \$27, \$104 million short on the current side. In essence every month, every single month, if we were to spread it over a 12 month period, we need to borrow nearly \$9 million to take care of our current problem in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. So there is a simple interpretation for that, for all of us, tonight I went outside, Mr. Speaker, to get my usual snacks, I came in with some crackers and so forth, I have to problem that we are setting the example here in the Parliament.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Just a minute please, let me just put that one to rest, please, it is my instructions because I did not intend, I did not expect that we would have been here this late and I know that sometimes we have done this, and the food remain there and spoil and I instructed them that they should not order any snacks for this day, and I ask then seeing that we were going a little longer that we should facilitate by bringing some refreshment there, and that is the fact of matter. Thank you.

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: I thank you for your prudence and your vigilance, Honourable Speaker, which has my support. Mr. Speaker, I go back to the fact that the dance cannot pay for the lights and I relinquish the term that all of us have to band our belly this year. I think the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister was quite correct, I think I captured her statement in that regard when she said “these are hard economic times” those are her words. But it is factual and honest. These are hard economic times. And now people need to understand that and get that message, seeing through the eyes of the government of the day.

But Mr. Speaker, while one can come to grips that on the recurrent side that there is a deficit in cash and it is so stated what occurs on the capital side is an attempt to mislead this Honourable House and the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Now, I know you are going to say, that that is tough language, Mr. Speaker, but I

will tell you why I say so Mr. Speaker, and the Director of Audit has reflected on this before that year after year after year we are preparing budgets that are unrealistic and do not meet the target.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we proposed to spend \$176 million on the capital side, and we are indicating that we would raise \$281 million, \$54 million from grants, \$52 million from external loans, \$33 million from local loans, capital revenue \$25 million and other receipts, the most, Mr. Speaker, the most, is coming from other receipts \$115 million. Well, I did it last year and I will do it again, and every year so long as you continue to be untruthful. [Interjection] Mr. Speaker, I am here as an elected member, I tell you that, you will not make that. Mr. Speaker, in 2001 the provision for other expenses was \$16.9 million, we received zero. In 2002 we provided for \$9.3 million we received \$.3 million. In 2003 we provided for \$14.6 million we received \$.6 million; in 2004, we provided for \$9.8 million we received \$1.3 million, in 2005 we provided for \$48 million, we received \$3 million, \$45 million short, Mr. Speaker, in 2006, we carried it up to \$55 million and we only received \$2.4 million, in 2007 we went up again to \$59 million and we got zero, nothing, naught. In 2008 \$75 million, 2009 \$71 million and now 2010 \$115 million and this year we come back to \$104 million, and Mr. Speaker, last year we did not receive \$5 million; and we must know, we must know on the basis of a 10 year history and record that this is not going to happen.

So be sure Mr. Speaker, of the \$176 million of the capital programmes, it is in all high probability that \$115 million may not happen, because the record shows these monies are not going to be received. Well I have made it a stretch, Mr. Speaker, because to correct myself, if we have grants of \$54 million, including from reputable sources like for instance the EU, the \$3 million from the United States of America, well we know we are good for \$57 million, \$60 million, Taiwan we will get those, Venezuela we will get those, but the fact is nearly \$100 of the capital projects may not happen. And I saying it is wholly unprofessional because it is not just a matter of the Cabinet, the professional people who are preparing these budgets they must not do it, year after year, after year after year and we must stop it, because it is misleading the business community and others who depend on our capital programmes of the government. I want to say that, Mr. Speaker. That is the point I am making.

So Mr. Speaker, there is, as I said last year and I repeat again, there is a serious credibility gap with respect to these estimates, based on the fact that on the recurrent side we are short by \$104 million and on the capital side we are over stating our possibilities by nearly \$100 million. In short we are looking for over \$200 million, to give effect to these estimates. And so, Mr. Speaker, we end up in a vicious cycle, because if in fact, we have to bridge the gap, that is to find the \$104 on the recurrent side or the nearly \$100 million on the capital side, if we are truly proceeding to do what we say we want to do we will have to go and perhaps borrow and so the interest payments have been understated because we may in fact be borrowing more in the course of the year, than we had originally calculated for.

Mr. Speaker, what we have heard in this House and I have heard it stated before on talk show radio that is never mind what is placed on the books we are going to effect savings. How? We will not fill the posts when they become vacant. Well that is not right, Mr. Speaker, I have heard that stated. I am not accusing any of the Honourable Members in here as so saying. I am not heard any, but I have heard talk show hosts saying that and that should not be said, because if we make provisions in the Estimates for staffing then we should have the

intention to fulfil them and should not turn around and use the absence of fulfilling those posts as a reason for savings.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take a little time out and pay some attention to some of the Private Sector matters that I shadow in this Honourable House. Mr. Speaker, I go to page No. 600 of the Capital Estimates.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Six, zero, zero?

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Six, zero, zero. But this one, Mr. Speaker, is Project No. 400601 (these things are pretty fine for people like myself whose eyes are strained). There is a provision here, Mr. Speaker, for SVG Disaster Management Enhancement Project of \$75,000.00, Mr. Speaker, nobody in this House would underestimate or understate the importance of disaster management preparation, and so the question, Mr. Speaker is not why we have \$75,000.00 provided for here, and it says, “For training, purchasing of emergency supplies and equipment”. I flagged this, Mr. Speaker, only because of a trend that I have picked up in our Budget Estimates and that is, when they are presented, and I have heard it said today, “These are the Estimates for 2011 and Forecast for 2012 and 2013”, two years ahead. Last year it was said it was for 2010 and with a forecast for 2011 and 2012. I find, Mr. Speaker, that in too many occasions what we are seeing in the year in question, and in this case 2011 has little or no bearing to what was forecast the year before. So, I do not know if it is a convenience matter only I figure they just put in to balance these statements.

Seventy five thousand dollars is budgeted here for disaster management; last year the provision was for \$350,000.00. Now, you would want to believe that coming right after Tomas one thing we would have learnt is that we are under prepared for disaster management, and we must do all within our powers to be realistic in that preparation. Mr. Speaker, I am of the view that this money is much too small and that we have to look for ways in which we can improve this. In fact, I do not have a great degree of confidence in it because it is coming by way of local notes. [Interjections]

Well, I know you are raising an interesting question there which I am prepared to join you in debate because I am not for a minute going down that road with you, and arguing that you are spending too much that has never been my argument. That has not been my argument, so do not include the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown to be a *naysayer* with respect to the budgetary provisions. I am not going to be in that; I am not going to be caught there.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: I know you were different.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: I am suggesting to you very, very strongly that we have to do much more. Because in fact, what this Estimates says is who now does not have is more than likely not to have for 2011, because that is the nature of things; things hard and rough. And there are very many people who are out there expecting some hope from this Budget and we say it is not going to happen on the Recurrent side and more than likely it will not happen on the Capital side no the [Interjection] On the Recurrent side we are just holding things tight, it is more than less the same as it was last year, there is not going to be any expansion

in the Public Service. The figures are the same and they have also provided for the increments. So, things are going to be the same and in the Capital things are going to be constrained, let us not stay there. [Interjection]

But I want to move on, Mr. Speaker, to page No. 622 because I want to go back to this to keep this same theme alive and to deal with the same constraints. [Interjection] No. 622, Ministry of Tourism and Industry, your Ministry I believe.

HONOURABLE SABOTO CEASAR: Yes.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Mr. Speaker, in the new portfolios allocated the Tourism Ministry has now picked up some of the Industry matters that were previously there in the Ministry of Science Technology, which carried a lot of private sector work. In fact, there is an interested observation, Mr. Speaker, maybe I will leave that for the Budget. There has been some serious rolling back, very serious and I see the Minister nodding his head. Very serious rolling backs of private sector activities.

Mr. Speaker, let us look at project No. 901004 - Establishment of Industrial Space; well if we flip the page on No. 624 under - Capital Expenditure External Loans of Establishment of Industrial Space; it says: "This project is now under Local Loans". So, it is not going to happen through External Loans, perhaps people do not want to lend you money outside to deal with domestic things ... I do not know I am just conjecturing. When we come back now under Local Loans we see the provision there - anytime you see 10 in these Budgets now (and I am talking about ten years of experience); it means more than likely that is not going to happen: that is what it means it is a fancy language. "This project is under review" meaning that the Minister is perhaps not very confident that these funds will be raised locally to do that – Industrial Space.

But you see, Mr. Speaker, there was a similar project under the Ministry of Telecoms – Project Title 801001 and then the provision, Mr. Speaker, was for a \$197,500.00. So, from near certainty that we are going to spend a \$197,000.00 for Industrial Space within a year, we have gone to project under review; perhaps government is rethinking it. You cannot be upset if the Government wants to reorder its priorities and that is fair game, but I am making the note that we are cutting and contrive and things will be in constraint: that is all I am saying on that so far. Speaker when we get down to 900804 – Tourism and Private Sector Development Project, \$165,000.00 Mr. Speaker, is provided for. Mr. Speaker, while this sounds like a fair attempt and it may well be within the circumstances, we do not know the Government books, the previous projection was for \$300,000.00, so again there is nearly 100% cut in what was. [Interjection]

Mr. Speaker: The Tourism Development Project - again a provision for \$200,000.00, the previous forecast for that same activity to be spent this year was \$972,000.00 nearly a \$1 million. So this is about \$800,000.00 less than what had been forecast just a year ago to be spent. So, if I am looking at these things as a Private Sector Investor I begin to get worried that I am saying: *this rolling back, this scaling back of things private sector.* [Interjection] Mr. Speaker, Tourism and Private Sector Development under Capital Expenditure Grants, there is a provision for \$1.8 million that is the one I think you are drawing my attention to.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Right.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Quite correct - that you ask me to use my bifocals for?
[Interjections]

HONOURABLE SABOTO CEASAR: On the same page.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: On the same page?

HONOURABLE SABOTO CEASAR: Yes! Yes! On the same page.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: That there is 1. ...? And we are on the same page?

HONOURABLE SABOTO CEASAR: We are on the same page.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: \$1.8 [Laughter]

HONOURABLE SABOTO CEASAR: I do not have to correct you.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: [Laughs] I know, you know, you do not have to correct. I see you know I had to correct, I see the bright broad grin on your face, you feel happy about that. The only thing about it is that before now you had projected that you would spend \$5.7 million. [Interjections] But you see I am just consistent with my theme, the money is not there; you are rolling back and you scaling back. So the Private Sector has less and less reason to be optimistic that this Government will deliver for them that is what I am trying to say to you. The reverse should be happening because the Private Sector ought to be the engine of the economy and what we ought to see is more happening to you [Interjections] more happening. Well, next week on the Budget I will show you what we should do; but this debate does not speak to that. [Interjection]

That is one of the unfortunate things about the Estimates because if you come and you accept or you reject the Estimates solely on the basis of the data that is in front of you, you are only providing half of the debate. So, we have to continue this thing next week when we could attend to the Revenue side of things; because you see on this side we in the New Democratic Party have a whole new vision.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Could we cut the dialoguing now ...

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: A whole new vision for St Vincent and the Grenadines, Mr. Speaker. [Interjection]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Address the Chair. Stop the dialoguing.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Mr. Speaker, reminds us that we need to bring him into the equation and address him properly.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Not necessarily that.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: You do not want to be brought in: you do not want to be brought in, Mr. Speaker?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I do not want the one-and-one sort of thing that is going on ...

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: So, Mr. Speaker, through you to the Honourable Minister of Industry.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Just a minute that is not even what I am saying. But I do not want when he says something you come back and you are answering that kind of dialogue that is what I am talking about. If you are debating you are debating and you are not just stopping to address him and you all keep going backward and forward that is what I am saying. Cut the dialoguing and address the House on these issues. Thank you.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: But you notice, Mr. Speaker, that there is no notes, you notice that? [Laughter] Mr. Speaker, to be continued. I want to take a little look, Mr. Speaker, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Every year I am worried about this Ministry, the Foreign Affairs matters are not my business I believe there is a Minister on that side who has some professional competence in that area. I trust that I am correct and so I expect that he would be ... (he gives me a kind of half of smile) he is not so sure where I am going with the matter [laughs].

So, the Foreign Affairs side of things is not my business, Mr. Speaker, but you know every year that I have had this more than banter with the Honourable Sir Louis Straker that there is little or nothing there for Trade. And you cannot have a country that is serious about growth, development, advancement and going forward if the provisions for trade and development are either non-existent, not forthcoming or undersupported. And it has to be an absolute disgrace of the highest order that a Trade Ministry could have a Capital programme of \$399,000.00 not even a half a million dollars. They cannot even mount a serious exhibition somewhere, Mr. Speaker, but in fairness to this Honourable Minister today, he has a little bit more in the Budget than has been there before. At least he has been accorded a Video Conferencing Centre but beyond that there is no capital provision here to take this country forward.

Mr. Speaker, if we go to page No. 512 of the Estimates and we look at the 2011 Indicators for Commerce and Trade and I am only going to pull two of them:

“Prepare a trade facilitation action plan by February 28, 2011 laying out the concrete results to be accomplished during Fiscal Year 2011 within the framework of a public/private sector partnership”.

And we go further down to the second to last bullet Mr. Speaker.

“Develop in conjunction with the Customs and Excise Department an Import/Export Procedure Guide by May 31st, 2011 to assist in the process of trade facilitation”.

These are not only desirable, Mr. Speaker, but they are must-do activities that any serious Trade Ministry must get on top of, but you have to provide for it and you have not provided a dime in the Estimates to achieve this. And I am putting it to you ...

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker please ...

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: State your point of order and then I will take my seat.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: The Point of Order is that I would like to show you that this is a Recurrent Expenditure for these items, and \$1.8 million are in the Estimates on page No. 513 for Commerce and Trade. These are not Capital Expenditure.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: May I, Mr. Speaker? Mr. Speaker, I addressed a subject matter for which I have not just considerable training, professional qualification, certification and hands on experience – Geneva, Japan and China; and working on these matters but I remain current, Mr. Speaker, on these issues. In fact, I will share with you as I will develop, Mr. Speaker, next week in the Budgetary Debate on opportunities for convergence to regional cooperation; the matrix of activities that are required for Trade facilitation. You will see that it goes way beyond a recurrent provision, Mr. Speaker, and it requires significant Capital Expenditure, Mr. Speaker. So, I know what I am speaking about and I will not be deterred this evening as I said I will detail them and the symmetries that are involved there in large measure when we come to the budgetary side.

Because indeed, Mr. Speaker, Trade facilitation which involves the development of e-commerce, single-window activities, custom procedures, streamlining of the transport chain, adoption of international standards, phytosanitary standards and interface between the private and public sectors cannot be taken care of with this \$1.8 million that is spoken about here. [Interjections] I do not care how much you are talking about I am correcting you, and suggesting that you stop talking about what you do not know about. [Interjections] Thank you, Minister Miguel.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: The Prime Minister will deal with that there.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Mr. Speaker; I want to take a little time out to raise now but to develop later what the Honourable Senator Francis attempted to provoke me into a little earlier, and which some people know now is ... [Interjection] That is where it ended? [Interjection] [Laughter]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: [Inaudible] speaking. [Laughs]

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: May I continue, Honourable Mr. Speaker?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Go ahead Sir. Go ahead.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: I want your undivided attention, Mr. Speaker, I will allow you to finish your ...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: No it is alright. I can multitask very well.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Mr. Speaker, I was listening on my way from the funeral session this evening to the presentation of the Honourable Member Senator for the Northern Grenadines, which walked us through a most important part of these Estimates that we often gloss over or look over, Mr. Speaker, that at the end of the day these exercise ...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Ten minutes to conclude.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: More than enough time Mr. Speaker, I am going to finish well within that time. This exercise and examination of important statistics, Mr. Speaker, is more than just those of us who have the temporary privilege to be in this parliament on either side. As they like to say and I am in agreement with that; it impacts real flesh and blood individuals and people, it speaks to real bread and butter issues for the people. And by and large, Mr. Speaker, these people come out of constituencies because that is what gets us here; that is what has me here to be speaking this evening. We represent a constituency: albeit for the time being. Everything changes, none of us has title deed on what is here. Sir James reminded us it is an in and out club that is what it is. It is an in and out club.

Mr. Speaker, when I examined the Estimates provision with respect to Central Kingstown, I saw very little done for farm roads. Now that may sound strange, Mr. Speaker, because I am speaking after all about Central Kingstown and I have said so often in the City we are as urban as we are rural. You get up at the back of Kingstown in the areas of Trigger Ridge and Green Hill; the types of living is just as in many rural communities, some very serious farm activity takes place and in many instances the farmers are crying out for the access roads to the lands, Mr. Speaker. Nothing is contained in these Estimates that provides for improved farm access for those people there in Green Hill for Central Kingstown Honourable Minister for Tourism. I am not saying that there are no provisions for farm roads, there are provisions for farm roads but I am speaking with respect to my constituency. [Interjection] And I love that fact that I can speak for my constituency [knocking on the desk] you know, there was a time I could not say that you know, [laughs] [Interjection] I know, I know ...

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: The Landlord should fix the roads.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: The Landlords should fix the roads. You are saying the landlords should fix the roads.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Yes, they are renting lands from private citizens.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Minister Francis says the Landlords should fix the roads in Green Hill and Trigger Ridge. [Interjection] The landlords of Green Hill and Trigger Ridge must fix their own roads, that is what you said; good. [Interjection] Mr. Speaker, again even though there are provisions for river defenses again it does not speak to the problems of Central Kingstown, and this is a constituency where very many people need assistance against the ravages of the rivers that is eating into their lands. And it is a kind of unfortunate situation you know in terms of our development pattern; very often it is the people who are least able to help themselves - not always so, who have to go into these sorts of “marginal” land situation.

I am sure Minister Miguel has some of that in her Marriaquia area and it presents her with no ends of headache where you could begin and end, perhaps you can spend the whole Budget just dealing with river defence alone. But I hold the view because when you look at the seriousness of the problem, no single member coming to this House would within his or her lifetime of service in this House solve the river defence problems, in anyone of our constituencies. It is almost like a baton race in which you have to do some and somebody do some, but at least we must start it in a systematic way so that every year there is some provision that we do a hundred yards, two hundred yards, a mile, three feet whatever it is; sure a willingness and interest is not there with respect to Central Kingstown and I am making that appeal. [Interjection] Everything takes time and it comes back to money, we will deal with the money side of things next week.

The Recreational Playing Fields, Mr. Speaker, I do not get a sense that Sharpes will see a Hard Court this year to augment the unfinished playing field. And I only can cross my fingers that the pavilion started by Fraser Construction will be completed, because it is my hope and expectation that we should be able to have in that constituency this year inter village football competition – Sharpes, Green Hill, Paul’s Avenue, Kingstown and so on and so forth. And we shall also be able to do the same thing for women. Pretty much like in Marriaqua to have our basketball and netball activities, we needed to get those hard courts and Sharpes and Central Kingstown need it badly, because we know of the challenges presented at constituency, you know. We know of the challenges we have to find time.

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: Self-help.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Self-help, we agree to bring the materials and we are going to bring the labour. I am taking you up on the self-help. And you have inherited self-help from the father of self-help.

Roads and Bridges, Mr. Speaker, I already had the request down there in Block 2000 that that bridge needs to be attended to. And I think the one on River Road just before where the Singer/Vieira family is building their property that needs to get some attention. To straightened up and widen; we need to pay some attention to that, Mr. Speaker. And ‘lord’ the roads in Central Kingstown compete only with those of the Southern Grenadines, where we are still to place a red flag in a hole.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: You would not do that. [Laughter]

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: I will put a yellow one [laughs]. I will put a yellow one; but if it works and it will get attention, I will do that. But we have a busy network of roads coming off of Green Hill,

Sharpes, Kingstown Park and Largo Heights and they need to give some attention to those roads. Again, I know there are some priority issues there, but do what you can do. In fact, we also need to get some of the drains covered; I have raised it before, so that the pedestrians are less in danger when they are coming along.

Mr. Speaker, page No. 594, I looked at it because I had raised that question in this Honourable House of the Honourable Minister of Education. Grammar School our alma mater built in 1964.

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: It is coming.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: It is falling apart. I see you have a provision here for it and I was trying to go downstairs for my 2010 Budget to see if you had done the same thing to me again; because you had given me an assurance. You have put some monies here for consultancy fees but stop coming and come Madam Minister.

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: Yes.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Stop coming and come. [Interjection] [Laughter] I want to see, I want to see my alma mater look like the No. 1 School it is supposed to be. I mean in many instances when people leave their communities or schools and they go to Grammar School they are actually stepping down because the schools they are coming from are in better physical condition than the one they are going to and supposed to be the pre ...

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: It would not be forgotten.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: It would not be forgotten, and you are giving an undertaken in this five-year term that that will be done. I hold you to that Madam Minister. Grammar School and High School in Central Kingstown and when you are finished with those you will help me tile the floors in Stony Ground School.

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: You will see much more, do not worry.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: So, have no fear, Madam Minister is here. I am remembering that. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, there was something raised by the Honourable Minister of Education and I had not looked in that direction before, but like my colleague from the Southern Grenadines, I too will come and have a quiet word with you. And I speak to the facilities that you have where the young men and women can be trained in various disciplines; electrical work, mechanical work and so on and so forth. You know my own idea because I was thinking more of a hands on programme, and I do not know if the Speaker will allow me in my wrapping up to speak to the Honourable Minister.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: You promise me that you will take less than ten minutes.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Yes, but this is it.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: But you have gone over ten minutes. [Laughter]

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: You know when the thing sweet.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Conclude. Go ahead.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Madam Minister, I simply have to get like so many of my other colleagues the young men off the block: we got to do it.

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: [Inaudible].

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Well, [Laughter] and my idea was to get the young men to do programmes at VINLEC and Water Authority, Port Authority, the State Agencies and the Coast Guard so we could put them back to work either as fishermen, in agriculture, plumbers, masons and carpenters. I actually want some of those places using the state funds to put on staff and structure to teach these guys these on the job skills. But perhaps there is a room that we can use your own facility that rather going to VINLEC they perhaps can go to that institution, and VINLEC and so can put on the staff and do the training there and take us back there. Because we want to get these hundreds of young men back to work. The thing is all about jobs, jobs, jobs; work, work, work because no constituent wants to be at the doorsteps of us the politicians. They have pride and value in work and our Estimates, Mr. Speaker must be for the purpose of putting our people back to work. This Estimate Mr. Speaker, falls short, we have work to be done. Much obliged Honourable Speaker. [Knocking on desk]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Further debate, Honourable Senator McKie. [Laughs] Getting there; I have been sitting here for 5½ hours continuously so you must understand. [Laughs] Honourable Member for West St George, you have 45 minutes to make your submission and right after I get you going, I am going to ask the Honourable Deputy Speaker to hold the Chair for a while, while I deal with matters of personal convenience. So, let us get started when you are ready.

HONOURABLE CECIL MCKIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to make my contribution to the discussion on the 2011 Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure as lay before this Honourable House. Mr. Speaker, I like the word prudence because I think we are all very much aware of the financial hardships that the world is still undergoing and in the year 2010, it was agreed by everyone that we needed to be prudent. It was further agreed that for the year 2011 we are still under financial strain and therefore, we must exercise prudence and restraint. And when the discussions were held by the various Ministries persons from the Ministry of Finance and the person in charge ...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, please recognise the Deputy Speaker.

HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE (DEPUTY SPEAKER): Honourable Member, you may continue.

HONOURABLE CECIL MCKIE: When the discussions were held to finalise the Estimates it was all agreed again that everyone needed to be prudent in the management of the financial affairs of this country for the year 2011. Mr. Speaker, what we see here laid before us today is a reflection that we all agreed that we need to be prudent. What we see also reflected through the Ministry of Health Wellness and the Environment is an indication that the Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines continues to recognise the fact that we need to have a healthy nation and that if we have a healthy nation we would also have a wealthy nation. And therefore, the figures in the Estimates reflect the fact that over the years 2009, 2010 and 2011 that the Ministry of Health Wellness and the Environment will continue to be one of the focal Ministries over the next year.

The figures are captured on pages 431-473 on the Recurrent side and of course we would have the information contained in the Result Indicators on pages 425 -429. So, during my presentation, I will make reference to the figures contained therein. Mr. Speaker, I want us all to take note of the fact that under the figures under this Ministry, you would note that there had not been any cuts in terms of human resource personnel in this Ministry. In fact, the numbers have been increased by some 27 individuals [knocking on desk]. This is a clear indication that we are taking health very seriously for the year 2011.

It shows further our love and care for the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines and our determination to ensure that the people of this country continue to receive maximum health care so that they can continue to improve their standard of living. Let us look at pages Nos. 432 and 433 under the Health and General Administration, and before we look at that I should indicate that the Ministry of Health Wellness and the Environment will be expected to manage 19 programmes over the year 2011.

Very importantly, under the Health and General Administration is the fact that we now have placed physically at the Ministry two individuals called Health Planners – a Health Planner and a Deputy Health Planner. This is going to be very important going forward because physically placed at the Ministry would allow for better coordination in terms of intimacy between the relationship with the Planners and the Ministry Personnel. So, this is a very important development. Positions under this heading:-

Dietician

For years, the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital would have been operating without a dietician placed there. This position would allow the presence of such a person at that institution and no doubt that would be very, very important for the recovery of patients in terms of the diets that they receive at that institution.

Senior Clerk

This is to strengthen the middle management of the administration as we continue to improve the delivery of health services to our population.

Coordinator and Systems Administrator

HEALTH INFORMATION UNIT (HIU)

Mr. Speaker, we all know that the Ministry is in the process of developing such a Health Information System, but just developing the system on its own will not fit the bill, we need to have the relevant personnel in place

and that is why provisions are made for the Coordinator and a System Administrator. So, as soon as that system is set up there will be proper coordination; the development of networks and analysis of data. And these persons would ensure that that unit is up and running in the very shortest time, and that we are able to utilize the data which would be available particular on patients; so that we can use it to our advantage.

Mr. Speaker, let us look at the Oxygen Production Plant under programme No. 651 - pages 434 and 435. Over the past couple of years we have had a problem with the Oxygen Plant at the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital. As a result we have had to purchase medical oxygen at a price and cost that we hope to avoid. We purchased such oxygen from two sources because the capacity of either one of those sources would not be able to satisfy the demand. That is why we have made provisions this year under the Capital side \$2 million and under the Recurrent side \$138,000, which is local funding. We have already organised or recognised a couple of different possibilities in terms of where we can establish this Plant, and it is expected that once this Plant has been established that our oxygen bill will be significantly reduced. So, over the next year this project is going to be a very important one for the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital and for the health services of St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Medical Administrations, Medical Stores And Pharmaceutical Services

Let us look at it under programme Nos. 660,661 and 662. Mr. Speaker, we all know that first to be able to continue to provide top quality service in the field of health in St Vincent and the Grenadines, it is going to be challenging, and that is why we have provided an allocation of \$500,000 through a European Union Grant - that is on the Capital side. You can find it under No. 651101 and that would help us to modernise the Health Sector – No. 612. This is going to assist us in modernising the health sector.

From time to time as is natural, we have challenges and that is why in the process of modernising we will have to strengthen our management systems, our procedures and our lines of communication. We need to hold persons responsible, and let them know they need to maintain their lines of duties and to report where necessary, so that we continue to manage that system effectively and efficiently. So, we hope to see improvements for the year 2011 as is the case in all of the other Ministries.

The Milton Cato Memorial Hospital, page 443 – programme No. 664. In the whole process of modernising of the Health Sector we need to look at a number of factors and I think the member from the Northern Grenadines and Southern Grenadines they made mention to the fact that we need to examine certain operations at the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital. I think it will be very important over the next year, first to pay particular attention to the building: the structure at the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital, and as such we have funding of \$750,000.00 through the European Union Grant again, as well as \$50,000 - Local Counterpart Funding and this is in connection with the tenth EDF. And a little earlier on the Honourable Prime Minister would have indicated in the case of the Southern Grenadines that funds at a later date, through the European Union would be made available to upgrade the facilities in the Southern Grenadines.

Fixtures and Equipment

It is also going to be very important over this year for us to improve on this aspect at the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital. It is very important that we allow not only the staff but the visitors, and the patients to be comfortable at that institution and funds have been provided in this regard. We will also look at the actual comfort of the

staff through improving on facilities, existing facilities there as well, and in discussion with the staff at the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital this has been agreed on and a course of action would be pursued.

The whole delivery of service, the objective is for us to continue to improve the delivery of health care service not only at the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital but at all of our Health Clinics and Health Centers throughout the length and breadth of St Vincent and the Grenadines and through this year's Estimates we will continue to work in that direction.

Mr. Speaker, I must mention here a very important development which we expect will take place over the next two, three weeks. I think again the Honourable Member from the Southern Grenadines indicated that from time to time we need to send patients to our neighbouring countries. Over the next two three weeks we expect that a very important CT Scan would arrive here in St Vincent and the Grenadines which would allow our people to receive that treatment right here. [Knocking of desk] No longer can we look at the provision of the service as something unusual and out of the way. It is now a run of the mill exercise that must be taken care of by our local health facility.

DR. THE HONOURABLE DOUGLAS SLATER: Many patients come here from overseas.

HONOURABLE CECIL MCKIE: Yes! Yes! And the Honourable Minister just indicated that from time to time we host persons from the region throughout the Caribbean [Interjection] and that is through the International Hospital for Children Project, where children come to St Vincent and the Grenadines for critical interventions and services. So, really and truly, I think we are moving in the right direction. [Knocking on the desk]

Yes, also over the next year we have a provision for \$100,000 to improve on the Dental Equipment and Health Equipment at the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital as well, and this will be implemented through the year 2011.

Lewis Punnett Home and the Mental Health Rehabilitation Center

Let us look at page 447 under programme Nos. 666 and 667. Both facilities have been identified for rehabilitation work in the shortest period possible. And we are in the process of finalizing exactly what needs to be done, how it is going to be done and seeking the necessary funding even as we go through this year's Budget to provide for an upgrade of these facilities. If you look under the Recurrent side you would see that we have provided the services of a Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner to be placed at that institution.

Community Health Services

Under Programme No. 668 page 451. Mr. Speaker, we [are] cognizant of the fact that we need to continue to improve the Health Services that I have indicated. If you look under the Recurrent side you would see provisions made here for the human resource development element of things: for four additional District Medical Officers, two additional Pharmacists, 2 Ambulance Drivers, 1 Male Attendant and a Foot Care Practitioner, conscious of the fact that we need and we have challenges where diabetes are concerned. This relates of course, Mr. Speaker, to the fact that we have completed the construction of a modern polyclinic at Stubbs and we intend to build two more at Marriaquia and at Buccament in the shortest period of time. So, we

have catered for these personnel, provided for them because we need to have them in place so that we can ramp up the operation at the polyclinic at Stubbs. It is already operational but we are utilizing the equipment and the staff from the old Stubbs Clinic at the facility now.

The idea is that we need to have that facility up and operational 24-7; twenty four hours seven days a week, and this staff complement will ensure ... you notice 2 Pharmacists that we have the necessary staff in place to operate that facility efficiently. Mr. Speaker, I mentioned about Dental Services and you will find that on page 453 and \$260,000 would have been provided in that regard.

Health Promotion

Let us look at programme No. 672 page 455. Mr. Speaker, we want to ensure that this unit continues to provide the services that it is intended to provide. In discussion at the Ministerial level, in the Ministry that should be, we have already identified exactly how we are going to ensure that all of our projects and our programmes are fully ventilated in the public, so that the public are very much aware on what is taking place in this critical Ministry. We therefore would increase our intensity in terms of our Health Education to the public of St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Rural Hospitals and Health Centers

Page 457, under programme No. 673. Positions have been provided under this programme as well for 1 additional Staff Nurse at the Georgetown, Chateaubelair, Levi Latham, Bequia and Union Island Hospitals to strengthen the delivery of Health Care Services in these areas. And we also note that at the Bequia and Chateaubelair Hospitals generators will be purchased and this is under the Capital Expenditure as indicated under programme 650901.

Nutrition Support

Programme No. 674. We continue to recognise the importance of this unit, which provides essential services to the children of the Primary Schools in St Vincent and the Grenadines and this is in consultation with the Nutrition Unit as well as the Ministry of Education. I think it is well recognised that this programme is a success story at the Primary Schools where the children can go and get a meal for one dollar; [Applause] wonderful.

National Family Planning Unit

Programme No. 675. We will continue to ensure that this unit provides the necessary information and Education to the public, so that our families can continue to plan and even as they plan to be aware of the fact that they need to exercise control, because the family is an essential fabric to the development of our nation, and therefore we would keep them at the forefront at all times.

HIV AIDS/STI Prevention and Control

This programme is under No. 677 page 467. This programme was previously under Capital. Mr. Speaker, we have to ensure and the Unit has already indicated that they want to incorporate HIV AIDS/STI Programme integrated as part of the Primary Health Care System in St Vincent and the Grenadines. The intention is to have not only persons trained in that field but Nurses at the various out clinics, polyclinics trained in such a way that persons suffering from these ailments can go to these facilities and obtain care just as a regular patient will do. So, we hope that this programme will be integrated into the Primary Care Health Services in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Environmental Management

Mr. Speaker, the management of the environment has almost become a science, it is no longer an easy, natural and normal process and as such, over the next year we will pay particular attention to the various protocols, the development of the outside world, how we need to be conscious and aware of the developments out there, and provisions are made under the Recurrent side \$500,000 – Project 651002 and \$100,000 under Local Funding. This will ensure that we continue to do what is necessary relative to the environment because the environment can devour us, can consume us if we do not take care of it. These funds have been provided and I will expand on that next week when we do the Budget discussion.

Modern Medical Complex

Programme No. 679. Mr. Speaker, this refers to the completion or the construction of the Modern Medical Complex at Georgetown, \$8 million has been provided on the Capital side, Project 650602. I think we all know that at this facility where they will be offering a wide range of services, the area of dialysis will make the difference because it is not now available in St Vincent and the Grenadines and I think this is something that the whole nation is looking forward to.

Integrated Medical Assistance

Programme No. 680 page 673. Mr. Speaker, this programme was previously called the Cuban Integrated Health Programme and catered for the various Cuban Medical Professionals coming into St Vincent and the Grenadines and they have been doing so for many years. What we hope under this new caption is that this programme would be enlarged and expanded so that we can incorporate other health care professionals under this programme. As a result, we have catered for an amount of \$484,000 programme No 680 under the Recurrent side. Mr. Speaker, I just want to look at a few other items under the Capital Budget.

Adoption to the Impact of Climate Change in Bequia

Project 651005 and I think the Honourable Member from the Northern Grenadines made mention of this programme earlier. This is being championed by Herman Belmar of Bequia as well as other members on that Island. The ground work has already been laid at Paget Farm for us to see a Desalination Plant established on that side of the Island. We have budgeted \$1 million through a Grant Fund from the Global Environmental Facility that is programme No. 651003; local counterpart funding \$500,000. We hope that this pilot project

would be a success so that this programme can be replicated throughout St Vincent and the Grenadines, in particular in the Grenadines where we all know we have challenges with water.

The Lives to live Project

No. 651006: Mr. Speaker, I think we all know that a few years ago we had assistance from our friends from Cuba, and a survey was done throughout the length and breadth of St Vincent and the Grenadines. That survey identified vast majority of persons in this country with challenges of one nature or the other. It is for this reason why \$120,000 had been provided for to conceptualize and start implementing this project in the year 2011. It will be conceptualized by the Ministry of Health and the implementation process will be done by the social development mechanism through the Ministry of National Mobilization.

Early Childhood Health Outreach Programme

Funded by UNICEF - some \$400,040 has been provided for this programme through Grants from UNICEF. This programme is expected to engage parents and disadvantaged children in health care for both of them through the use of community health aids. This programme is already on stream, Mr. Speaker, and we expect it will continue during the year 2011.

PAHO/WHO Project

No. 650801 – some \$100,000 is provided as Grants Funds and this will assist with training capacity building and some assistance with material, and of course we are grateful to these organisations for assisting us with in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, from my presentation you can see clearly that the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment will have an extremely busy year for 2011. Next week when I expand during the budgetary presentation I will look at some other projects that we will bring on-stream as well, particularly in the area of wellness. We think that we need to get our nation well and I expect that all of the Members in this House will assist in promoting this programme throughout their various communities. I look forward to working with them in this regard as the Minister of Health, Wellness and the Environment. [Interjection] Say that again? Okay, whatever it means.

Mr. Speaker, it was my pleasure to have presented the programme under the Estimates through the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment and I am much obliged to you for allowing me. [Knocking on the desk]

HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE (DEPUTY SPEAKER): Thank you, Honourable Member. At this moment, we pause to recognise the Speaker of the House as he resumes the Chair.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: You have done a very good job for the few minutes you have been there. [Laughter]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for North Leeward, I recognise you and I must remind you that you have 45 minutes in which you will make your presentation.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATTHEWS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, I rise to give my contribution to the budgetary Estimates Expenditure and Revenue for 2011. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, it was indeed a pleasure for me today this evening to get my feet wet. I sat there and I was wondering whether or not to have a go at it but then I said to myself I owe the people of North Leeward this much and here I am making my maiden Estimate discussion. [Interjection] [Laughter]

Mr. Speaker, as I sat there a lot of things went through my mind. I listened to the cross talk and to some extent more so I welcome that kind of camaraderie because I believe Mr. Speaker that all of us who are elected and nominated to this Honourable House, we are duty-bound and our duty, Mr. Speaker, is to serve the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines. [Knocking on desk] Mr. Speaker, we may have different approaches in doing so but I believe the common objective is for us in this Honourable House to provide a better life, an improved living standard for the people who elected us to serve them and those who are nominated we all have this big obligation.

Mr. Speaker, before I go on I must say that on the other side of the House are some people whom I have known for a very long time. I speak of the Honourable Clayton Burgin who I have known for over twenty years now and my good friend and former doctor ...

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: May I, if you may permit me on a point of order? I know it is your maiden speech; you would normally pick it up, Mr. Speaker, but he ought to refer to the Honourable Member by his designation as a Minister rather than the Honourable Clayton Burgin. And he was going on to Dr. Douglas Slater. I am not making a lot out of it, but he is getting his feet wet, it is by his ankle and I do not want it to cover his head.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: Thank you very much it shows the togetherness [inaudible]. I know you would love that word, because as I said, I know these gentlemen a very long time and the Honourable Senator at one time or the other was my personal doctor: so we go back a good way. [Interjection] [Laughter] I know the last time you complained about my stomach and I took your advice and I am working on that.

Mr. Speaker, I have been charged with the responsibility to shadow the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Environment [Interjection] Rural Transformation. Thank you very much and I will say a bit on the Environment as well. You know because of the makeup of the Ministries we try to - each of us took a piece off here a piece off of there just to do a good coverage. [Interjection] Yes. Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to comment as far as the Estimates are concerned with regards to the Ministry of Agriculture. I do so, Mr. Speaker, because St Vincent and the Grenadines Agricultural Sector was recently

seriously affected by the Hurricane Thomas. I know that in his deliberations maybe later or next week the Minister of Agriculture would have a lot to say in this regard. However, as I try to make some input and if for some reason or the other because I have wetted my feet I do not see things in the way they should be looked at, I hope that the Honourable Members on the other side with all the experience, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Agriculture and my few friends over there; I hope at the end of my parliamentary tenure that we all could become good friends. Because as I said in the beginning we are all here duty-bound to perform a duty for the people.

And Mr. Speaker, I believe and I feel good when I hear the Minister, the Honourable Minister of Education encouraging Members on this side to meet with her. And I am saying to you, Mr. Speaker, I hope this would be something that the other Ministers would allow because on this side we are opposition but all of St Vincent and the Grenadines must be served regardless of whether you are in government or not. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that from time to time I will be calling on several Ministers including yourself, Mr. Prime Minister, if so be it to bring the concerns of the people of North Leeward in the area that I think needs your attention. [Interjection] Well, I know, Mr. Prime Minister, that you consider all of St Vincent your *pickney*, so all of them are yours.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATTHEWS: Honourable Prime Minister, in the Ministry of Agriculture according to the Capital Expenditure, I looked at three major projects one on page 604-606 - Hurricane Tomas Rehabilitation and I saw I think it was \$3 million. Mr. Speaker, when we back track a bit at the ravages done by Hurricane Tomas we ask ourselves if this amount is enough to do what we are supposed to do to get us back on track. As I said I am not sure if there are provisions in other parts of the Estimates but you can correct me as I go along. Three million dollars, Mr. Speaker, for Hurricane Tomas Rehabilitation, there is also another \$600,000 I believe for Hurricane Tomas Small Farmers Recovery and there is also a \$1 million support to primary agriculture production. So, Mr. Speaker, in my opinion, we on this side of the House, we are saying, yes it is important, Mr. Speaker, that assistance be given to the Agriculture Sector but this modest amount to me will not do well. But as I said, maybe in other sectors in other parts of the Budget it could be in Recurrent Expenditure there are provisions to carry out programmes especially as I said to agriculture. We have lost a great deal of our crops - root crops as well as tree crops were affected during the Hurricane. I thought, Mr. Speaker, that more could have been done for this very important sector. Mr. Speaker ...

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: If my Honourable friend would give way?

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATTHEWS: Yes, I will.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: The Minister of Agriculture may speak about it but he is quite correct there are many areas in the Budget where there are items additional to assist in areas for agriculture. I mentioned the banana accompanied measures which are not there but which may well come before the end of the year. There is an off budget item through WINCROP which is a very important contribution. There is \$1.8 million I think the figure is the Honourable Minister of Agriculture, to be paid but WINCROP is a little short? So, we have taken the decision in Cabinet to provide \$792,000 to assist with WINCROP - \$500,000 from WINFRESH and an additional \$292,000, because of the WINCROP Farmers – the persons who have insured under WINCROP and who have suffered.

The other point is this which is not in the Estimates at all. In so far as Tomas is concerned, among the severest damage cost was in the forest and we require about \$31 million to rehabilitate that, and that is not matter which is yet sourced that is a very important number. So, I mentioned that in the context of your own contribution; both of the things – well three things really.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATTHEWS: Thank you, Honourable Prime Minister. Mr. Speaker, as I was saying agriculture is important to the economy of St Vincent and the Grenadines. To some extent a vast number of people depend on it for their livelihood and hence you see the importance that this sector plays in our country's development. We talk about a high importation Bill, Mr. Speaker, and St Vincent and the Grenadines is blessed with fertile soil, people who understand farming, however every effort must be made to give the farmers the necessary assistance so that they could go back to the land, and provide for their country especially when it comes to food security.

We are importing too much and I am hoping, Mr. Speaker, that in the replanting process that the Ministry of Agriculture would be undertaking after Tomas a lot of emphasis is placed in this regard because, Mr. Speaker, one of the major indicators for 2011 is to stimulate the agricultural diversification growth and development initiative. This, Mr. Speaker, I believe is very important and there are a number of indicators that are there. I am hoping ... that is why I commented in my earlier remark that the amount of money for projects that I see here, to me it looked a bit small and hence the reason why I made that comment. But the Prime Minister made some clarification and I do hope that agriculture in St Vincent and the Grenadines would be given the necessary support in order that our country could benefit. We have benefited in the past and that is why I say we have the experience.

We have a strong tradition of good farming practice in this country, and I do hope, Mr. Speaker, that whenever monies are allocated for this most important sector that all of the farmers in this country do benefit from it are not just those who in the opinion of some people support a particular political party. As in this case sometimes people get the impression if they are not toeing the party line that is in government, no support is coming to them. And hence as I said in the beginning we are all here to serve all of St Vincent and the Grenadines. And I do hope, Mr. Speaker, that whenever this ... and I look at it as a massive rehabilitation, rebuilding the Sector, when this is done that all the farmers ... as a matter of fact, we should have a situation where farmers are encouraged to go back to the land. In this country even though we talk about Tourism, as an alternative we have to realise that tourists want food to eat when they come to this country.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, I expect the Minister of Agriculture in his presentation whether now or next week would give us a clear indication that agriculture will be given the support in terms of financial resources to play its role in our country's development [Interjection] [Laughter]

Mr. Speaker, as I indicated to you part of my shadow portfolio is that of Environment and I want to take it home to North Leeward for this time. The reason why I say that, Mr. Speaker, in Troumaca in the village of Troumaca there is a gutter there, the people call it the German gutter. Mr. Speaker, I am appealing to this Honourable House that this needs some urgent attention. A recent visit to the area, I noticed that a house the precipice is

quickly approaching a house where people live at the moment; and I believe that something urgently needs to be done to address this problem before it escalates.

Yes, I know that it is a tight economic situation worldwide; we all talk about it; even on this side we recognise that, but I am saying that when we give priority, we must give it to something like this. And I would as the Member of the Southern Grenadines wants to invite you to the Southern Grenadines which you should do; I want to invite the Honourable Member who even I refer to him as the ‘candle’ Minister; the Minister of Works to come to North Leeward. I know he frequents down there so he should know what I am talking about.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: I am afraid of North Leeward. [Laughter]

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATTHEWS: You are only saying that I know you love North Leeward. Yes, I know that it is something that would get his attention and if he holds true to his true name as the ‘candle’ I know; he would put matters in place to address this problem. [Interjection] Mr. Speaker, as I said I covered a few things I do not want to take up my whole quota of time in the essence of time and so to speak. [Interjection]

Fisheries, Mr. Speaker, I noticed that the fishing sector in this country needs some urgent attention, at one point I remember listening to the Budget debate a few years ago and a lot of talk was made with regard to St Vincent and the Grenadines being able to sell fish abroad. I have looked at the Budget Estimates and I have not seen any project as I said if I am mistaken I would be glad for confirmation and correction; where any effort is made to bring us up to standard so that we can be able to sell our fish outside of St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, I came to this Honourable House because the people of the North Leeward constituency all of them could not come here themselves, so they sent me here to represent them and that is what I will be doing for the tenure that I am here. I say this, Mr. Speaker, because I want to touch on a bit of matters in the constituency of North Leeward. In 1999 thereabout Mr. Speaker, the then NDP government bought lands at Cumberland for a playing field and the people of Coulls Hill and Spring Village over the years have been promising the delivery of this playing field. I noticed in the Budget Estimates for 2010 there was a provision of \$1 million projected for this year, but this year on page 610, I think it is under the Ministry of Works, I see there is an allocation of \$295,000 to be funded by the ROC for continued work on the playing field. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that this playing field, this long overdue playing facility, sporting facility that is the correct name, for the people of Spring Village and Cumberland is something that is realised this year.

As I said they have waited long, going into twelve years now, and I think they have over wait and this is something they are looking forward to and I believe that a lot of work has been done. I can see it; I pass there on a regular basis. I hope that at the end of this financial year that the people of Spring Village could say, well we have waited long enough and it is something we can now claim as ours. [Interjection] He said he would have finished it since 2001 and he left office; so I do hope someone would finish up on his behalf. [Laughs]

Mr. Speaker, the last representative for North Leeward, I want to use this forum to thank him very much for what he has done for North Leeward, even though most of the people in the constituency believe he did not do enough. And I guess many of us here would get similar comments because being in politics I learned from

observing that you can never please your constituents because people always demanding stuff of you. That is the nature of political representation. Mr. Speaker, in the last general election, some haste was made to provide the people of Troumaca with a playing field. I see in the Estimates that lands were purchased for that purpose and I applaud the government for doing that because I was told that in 1972 people of Troumaca had a choice either a secondary school or a playing field; and they choose the secondary school. So they sacrificed their playing field for a secondary school and ever since that time they have always wanted because they were told that some lands would be bought to give them back a playing field, and so far it was never done. I saw in the Estimates, where I think last year one of the Indicators is indicating that lands were purchased for that purpose. I know that some work was started and I do not want to say that it is because of the Elections, I do not want to say that and I hope not. I hope this is a genuine attempt even though I have not seen anything in the Estimates indicating that there would be continued work on the project, but as I said I stand to be corrected. But I do hope that this Honourable House, the government side, sees it fit to honour the wishes of the people of Troumaca by granting them a completed playing field in a not too distance future. I hope it does not take as long as the one at Spring Village.

However, I must say too, Mr. Speaker, that I believe because of the haste in dealing with the playing field at Troumaca much thought did not go into the environmental impact: the factors that would affect the playing field because of the removing of the sand and the dirt and so on. What has happened now, Mr. Speaker, is that because of the rainy season and no retaining wall was built because it is like on a hill like, whenever the rain comes the soil is being washed down into an area we call Little Bay in Troumaca, and the people of Troumaca are a bit concerned and it is something that I think needs addressing. I am appealing to the relevant Minister to look at the situation because what has happened, the same soil texture as that of the German gutter that is prone to slippage is a similar thing that we have at the same area where the playing field at Troumaca is being constructed. And as I said, I do not know if was done in the haste of the Election and I do not want to think that but what is happening now is not a good sign and it is something we should address as soon as possible.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: But you should have talked with next week [Inaudible]

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATTHEWS: Honourable Prime Minister, I know for a fact and hence the reason why when you came I said I am going to speak because I know that all of North Leeward is glued to the television and the radio listening to their representative.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: You are looking at me with [inaudible] [Laughter]

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATTHEWS: Well, I hope you are talking in a collective way. [Interjection] Mr. Speaker, someone told me that the past representative of the constituency of North Leeward tried to provide too many playing fields and hence he neglected other areas. I am not so sure but the reason why I made that point; again during the election another attempt was made at an area called Golden Grove at Chateaubelair for a playing field for the people of Fitz Hughes and Chateaubelair. Ground work was started and a similar problem to what is happening at Troumaca is now happening at Golden Grove, because it is very close to the road and because of the rainy season that we are currently experiencing the road is in a mess.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I know the [Inaudible] I am going to fix it.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: Glad to know that; the man with the purse.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: [Inaudible]

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: That is good to hear, Honourable Prime Minister. [Interjection]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: North Leeward.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATTHEWS: [Laughs] Mr. Speaker, I am saying and that is why I said at the beginning the Government is for all of St Vincent and the Grenadines. And while we are here to agree to disagree we must have a compromise sometimes. I remember the Honourable Prime Minister saying and I believe him that he is going to listen to the people and I believe by doing so he is referring to people on this side of the House as well. Thank you.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I believe you will represent the people better than [inaudible]

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATTHEWS: You were going to say better than Jerrol but your tongue slip man [Laughter] Mr. Speaker, the constituency of North Leeward on mainland St Vincent has been blessed with a number of tourist attractions and I want to commend the Ministry of Tourism for the work they have done in North Leeward. I am here as the representative of the people and whenever someone does something good for the constituency, I will be among the first to applaud. [Interjection] If he was the Minister of Tourism well so be it. If he was not well [Laughs] as I said because I believe that those projects were under... I think they come under the auspices of the Ministry of Tourism. Am I correct, Honourable Prime Minister?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Yes.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: Thank you very much.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: He was a good Rep. [Laughter]

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATTHEWS: [Laughs] Yes, I like the word there – he ‘was’ a good Rep. Mr. Speaker, on page 610 of the Estimates there is an allocation there of \$2 million I think under Transport and Works Ministry for Feeder Roads. And it is important because if we are to produce in our agriculture sector the way that we should, it is important that farmers have access to proper roads to bring their produce out. As I said before, I hope that the farming community would benefit from this and not just put it on the book and next time you see it again. I hope, because as I referred to earlier on, in agriculture we need to restart because of the damage we suffered from Tomas and I know that the Honourable Prime Minister will agree with me on that.

As I was mentioning we are blessed with many tourism sites in North Leeward and at Trinity Falls one of the great sites, we have had the unfortunate incident where a number of persons lost their lives there: tourists. I know at present, Mr. Speaker, that work is going on, on the road there into the falls. That is happening at the moment and I hope it does not happen like the last time when work started and stopped. Because the nature of the trail going to Trinity Falls if you start and stop and the rain comes what you have done would not make any sense it would mash it up again. The drainage, I think needs to be tackled first and then you deal with the road. But it is important that we put measures in place to prevent incidents that we had; I believe at one point we had about three persons died because of having difficulties in the water at Trinity Falls.

This Honourable House, Mr. Speaker

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: It is the nature of the suction.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATTHEWS: I am aware of that. And someone was suggesting, someone from North Leeward who has the experience, that what should be done a simple thing is to put a piece of rope across the plunge pool like. So that could help, maybe if a person is caught in the middle they could grab. That is a simple way of dealing with a problem like that in the short term.

Mr. Speaker, I noticed in the Estimates there is a provision for I cannot recall the page right now, for some, where crown lands and so would be sold. And I hope there is provision where lands and I believe there is, lands could be bought for distribution to people who are in need of spaces to build houses. I said that because in Rose Bank, Mr. Speaker, you would have realised and history will tell you, that Petit Bordel as a village came about because Rose Bank was too small and hence the people had to go to Petit Bordel. Almost everybody in Petit Bordel has a relative in Rose Bank. This problem has started once again in the village of Rose Bank, I am hoping, Mr. Speaker, that something could be put in place because there are lands available in Rose Bank in an area they call Dark View, from private individuals.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Jerrol done organise that one.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: I thought so too.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: That is a fact.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: But when I check with the owners just before ... it is not a fact, I stand corrected but I spoke with the owners just before the Elections, and I got a different story but as I said, I stand corrected. However, Mr. Speaker, I am hoping that the people of Rose Bank, the young people especially in an effort to get somewhere to build, a piece of land, a piece of this rock we call SVG, to call their own that measures be put in place to allow residents of Rose Bank who are seeking plots to build houses they can be so dealt with.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say to this Honourable House that during the Election campaign one of the projects that came up for discussion – possible project is to cut a road from Cumberland to the Waterfalls at Wallilabou.

There is an area through that mountain you call L'Anse Mahaut. I am hoping in the future I am saying it out now, Mr. Speaker, that this can be given some serious consideration because by doing so it is going to cut by about half an hour getting to North Leeward. L'Anse Mahaut Road as I said you start at the Waterfall in Wallilabou and end up at Cumberland.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member you have ten minutes to conclude your presentation.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATTHEWS: The older people in the communities that is where they used to walk long time between North Leeward and Central Leeward cut across and get into Barrouallie quite easily. I am told that the area there is not too bad in terms of its topography to construct a bypass road. I say that because when we look at the engineering of the North Leeward Highway it is a very challenging one especially for people who are coming in the area for the first time who have to drive on that road. I travel on it and I always say a prayer to and from, because you never know what can happen. I noticed sometimes tourists rent vehicles and come to North Leeward and they are on the wrong side of the road, because it is so narrow they try to keep in the middle and they end up on the wrong side. So, I am hoping that this project is something that could be given serious consideration for the future. [Interjection]

Well, I hope [Interjection] [laughs] that is not the indication because we were supposed to have gone across there about five years ago. Well, as I said, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, when anything to develop this country once it is not a talk, Mr. Speaker, because when anything happen too long they get boring and you keep hearing it and nothing is happening. Anyway, Mr. Speaker, but when the thing happen, when you make a plan saying you are going to start and you are going to open this road and by next election that was set for 2005 election that it would happen. You see that is why we must not make these boastful projections because in the end people look at us and say that as politicians they are not telling the truth. People said to me "Patel why did you get into that"? [Interjection] [Laughter] I said to them somebody has to do it, this country we need people in the Parliament who could make things happen for the development of this country.

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: Without vision the people perish.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: And as the Honourable Minister said, "Without vision people perish". This is why we must have the vision to do things and do it in a timely manner, so that the Vincentian public could say well; here is a group of people who are doing things for the benefit of the country. Honourable Prime Minister is indicating the money. I know that is challenging but we have to ... as you like to say "we have to be creative". That is how you like to put it, Mr. Prime Minister. [Laughs] I know that you are.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Like you quoting me more than you quote Arnhim [Laughter]

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATTHEWS: It is because I am replying to you. [Laughter] Anyhow, Mr. Speaker, before I wrap up I must mention that the village roads in North Leeward, the Highway is okay, but the village roads in North Leeward needs some attention. I heard the Honourable Minister of Works mentioned

something about roads and I hope that somewhere in his Estimates there is some consideration for village roads not only in North Leeward but throughout the length and breadth of this country.

River Defences System: I heard the Member for Central Kingstown mentioned that. The Chateaubelair Sharpes Park that is also a problem: where the river has eaten so much of the playing field - Chateaubelair/Sharpes area that it needs some attention.

Mr. Speaker, to be honest I did not realise I would have cherished this moment to do my maiden debate on the Estimates. Honourable Members and Mr. Speaker, much obliged. [Knocking on desk]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable Member for South Leeward.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Yes Honourable Member. Go right ahead, Honourable Member.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Honourable Members, I rise tonight to make my contribution to the debate with respect to the Revenue and Expenditure, which is set before us in this Honourable House. But before I go on, Mr. Speaker, I just want to take the opportunity to thank the God of heaven who has given me this opportunity to be here today. I am absolutely sure that as the Bible says: before I was formed in my mother's womb he knew me and he has predestinated me for such a time as this. I want to say thanks to the people of South Leeward for the vote of confidence that they have given to me, to elect me to represent their interest in this Honourable House. May the Lord command a blessing upon all of them regardless to whom they would have supported.

Mr. Speaker, I also take the opportunity to say congratulations. I just want to extend congratulations to my dear friend Senator Elvis Charles. He and I - we have worked together, we have taught together and we have been involved in primarily cricket together for quite a while. I remember one day about three years ago he met me in Town and he was saying to me, "One of these days you and I are going to be in Parliament, but we are going to be on opposite sides". And earlier today I have had a conversation with him, and I said to him, "It is important than whenever we speak we remember that the power of life and death are in the tongue; therefore whatever we speak we must ensure that it is positive and that we speak life into being and that we do not pull down and destroy". The same thing I apply to this Honourable House. Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that all of us who have this esteemed position would recognise the fact that this Honourable House is not a House where we come with any form of animosity and try to devour one another. But let us recognise that we are here for a purpose, and that is to serve first and foremost the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Mr. Speaker, much has been said about this debate for the entire day. There were times when I sit at home and I view what is taking place in this Honourable House and I said, I wonder whether or not I will be able to spend an entire day sitting in one place. Well, the thing that I fear most has happened to me. I have had to sit down here but it has been a learning experience and I am looking forward to working not only with my own

colleagues here; but I call you on the other side my colleagues also, because we are here to work in the best interest of the citizens of St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Mr. Speaker, I will proceed and I do not want to scare anyone into thinking that I am going to be as long as my dear friend the Honourable Member for North Leeward; because we have had an agreement that both of us would speak collectively for not more than 45 minutes.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Well, he took [inaudible]. [Laughter] He has broken his first promise [Laughter]

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: You see, Mr. Speaker, that is what happens. I suspect it is true what they say; “Time flies when you are having fun”. And I believe my Honourable friend here was having fun in his deliberation here tonight. [Interjection] [Laughter]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Senator.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: It is okay, I have no problem with that I will always be here that is one thing I can tell you. So, you may have to get a little weary of me Senator Francis. [Interjection] Mr. Speaker, when we examine the Estimates that is set before this Honourable House we recognise straight off the bat that the Estimates give us an indication of what the economy situation in St Vincent is going to be for the year 2011. Looking at the Estimates and I believe that all of us have an obligation to present this factually to the best of our ability because the well-being of our people depend on what is set before us today. And we do not want to paint a picture neither of gloom or doom nor with this glorious expectation that the way of life for the citizens is actually going to improve in 2011. Because when we examine the financial summary, Mr. Speaker, we recognise straight off the bat that the government on the Recurrent Expenditure side is going to spend less or is proposing to spend a little less than it actually spent in 2010.

We can say that, Mr. Speaker, when we examine closely what the subtotal of the Estimates there of the Recurrent Expenditure, which is \$609 million and that is Roman numeral (i). That is the Estimates the Financial Summary that is \$361,000 less, and we might say that the figure is not really significant but we need to paint that picture that the government is going to spend a little less than it actually spent last year. But the question is how exactly does the Government intend to meet its obligation? The obligations before us Mr. Speaker are wages and salaries and I would not want to go into all the details, but we see that that takes up the greatest proportion of what the Government intends to spend for the year 2011, which is \$243.6 million. We also see that the Government has a principal responsibility to pay pensions and NIS and so on, which is \$46 million. Then we have the Other Transfers that we have heard so much about today and that is a \$113 million, and if the Government is intending to borrow money obviously it is going to have to pay interest which accounts for \$53.2 million. And then we notice that in order for the Government to do its work for 2011 there has to be Goods and Services which accounts for \$75 million.

Mr. Speaker, the question is how does the Government intend to finance that? And we see that clearly on the Recurrent Revenue a significant amount of that money is going to come from taxes and it is important that our citizens understand that the taxes that all of us are going to have to pay have increased from \$450 million in

2010 to \$464 million for this year, which is before us for 2011. And the non-tax revenue which accounts for \$40.5 million gives us a subtotal on the Recurrent Revenue side of the Estimates of \$504.7 million. When we look at the other side which is the Recurrent Expenditure, we see that the Government intends to spend more than it is actually going to receive, and we have heard a lot of people argue but from my understanding it is a clear deficit. And a deficit here is like you running a business and you are spending more than you are actually receiving. So, the question we have to ask ourselves here, Mr. Speaker, where will the Government get the money to offset the deficit on the Recurrent Account?

Would the Government have to borrow to finance its obligations which really should have come from the taxes and the non-tax revenue? That is a question that we need to ponder on. And if the Government needs to borrow to meet its obligation, it therefore means that this is not a good state of affairs for the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines for 2011.

I will quickly go now, Mr. Speaker, to the Capital side and while I would not go through or itemize all of these categories, one of the things that really got my attention here, Mr. Speaker, with respect to Capital Expenditure is the Economic Affairs. And Mr. Speaker the figure there that is presented before this Honourable House is \$86.9 million, which is significantly less when we examine what was allocated or estimated in 2010, which was \$172.9 million. Now, Mr. Speaker that is of importance to us because I believe that this is the category where most of the Economic activities are going to take place. This is where we are going to have people being employed particularly I would say in the various communities. So, if they are going to see such a significant cut in the amount of money that is proposed here on the Capital side of this Revenue and Expenditure Account; it means that less and less people or there is a less prospect, a less likelihood of people gaining any form of meaningful employment in 2011. [Interjection]

I will come down to you a little while, and then maybe you and I can have a little discourse. But Mr. Speaker, I would move on but the broad picture that is before us is that all is not well with the economy of St Vincent and the Grenadines. I know the Honourable Prime Minister would like to refer to himself as an economic genius and I believe that 2011 is going to be the year when you would have to prove yourself so to be Honourable Prime Minister.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I have promised I am not going to be very long tonight because next week if the Lord wills, I am going to get the opportunity to come back here to debate the Budget. [Interjection] No problem [Laughs] I will be ready for that I hope you will be ready for that too. Okay, no problem. But, Mr. Speaker, I have been given certain responsibility as Honourable Senator Francis loves to put it, shadow [Interjection] I have no problem. It is fine; it is fine Senator Francis and I went back a long way. My dear friend is telling me Senator Slater also, I like the sound of that Senator Slater [Laughter] But Mr. Speaker; I have been given the sort of responsibility to shadow Community Development [Interjection]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: [Inaudible] Minister of Foreign Affairs. [Laughter] [Inaudible] That is the man.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Well, he is still a Senator you can get past that. [Interjection] You see ... he did this time? You see what happened in South Leeward we use a cricket expression “Actually appealing for bad light in broad daylight” – bright sunshine that is why ... he was not brave enough to face me at the polls. [Laughter] You whipped me once, you get through but, Mr. Speaker, we would just move on. [Laughter]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: He retired as a champion. [Laughter] [Interjections]

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: He retired hurt. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I have the responsibility of shadowing Community Development, Local Government, Youth and Sports and as a community person I spent all of my life in Community Development. We know that if a community is going to develop, the members of the community must develop. There can be no community development if the residence of that community does not develop themselves. And Mr. Speaker, in order for this development to take place job opportunities have to be provided for the residences of the community. But when we examine the Estimates before us Mr. Speaker, we wonder whether or not these jobs will be provided to at least improve the way of life for the citizens in the respective communities.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard here tonight that with respect to community development and I believe that Senator Francis ...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Honourable Senator Francis [Laughter] Honourable Senator Francis I will be approaching you on a number of matters in my constituency particularly. I believe that South Leeward is poised to be a constituency that will develop; the various communities will see some form of development since Honourable Senator Francis is a resident there, and the Honourable Senator Browne also is a resident. [Interjection] Well, he is fringing. Right! [Laughter] Right he is fringing! Well, I cannot say the same thing for the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs; he has some visiting rights to South Leeward. But as the former representative for that particular area I am hoping that we are going to see projects in that particular area. Mr. Speaker, we see in the Estimates that provision has been made for retrofitting of Community Centres - refurbishing however you want to put. But we have in Campden Park a Community Center that has lost its roof not through Hurricane Tomas; but the roof collapsed for more than two years now. [Interjection] The issue is not how it was constructed.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Jerry did it, but he did not do that one very well.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Well, I have to recognise Jerry Scott former Representative and the best Representative that South Rivers has ever seen. [Knocking on desk] You are the one who has mentioned his name. He built that Community Centre probably you have a point in saying it has something to do with the construction; but the roof fell in and after two years absolutely nothing has been done to restore it. And I am wondering, Mr. Speaker, if the intention here is to ensure that everything that the New Democratic

Party would have constructed collapsed and go to ruins; [Interjection] because that Community Centre served the people of Campden Park and the surrounding areas. So, I am wondering whether or not in 2011 and I know the Honourable Member for South Windward is the person who has direct jurisdiction over Community Development. So, I am kind of more or less trying to kill two birds with one stone. So, I am making an appeal to you Mr. Minister and Honourable Senator Francis to look into that Community Centre to ensure that it is restored to its original condition. [Interjection]

Well, I am in Campden Park. But you see you should not even be talking, Mr. Senator, about Rillan Hill because you have special interest in Rillan Hill, and the Community Centre in Rillan Hill [Interjection] I mean traditionally we have not been doing well in Rillan Hill; but we have done better last election than we have ever done so there is hope. So, the point I am making, Mr. Speaker, is that the Community Center at Campden Park there is need for it to be restored. [Interjection] No! No! I said that before. I said that, Honourable Member, I said it before. You see Senator Francis has special interest there, you understand. [Interjection] You see in order to get to that Community Centre, Mr. Speaker, you have to walk there; because I am from Vermont, I was born there.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when you look at the condition of the yard getting to that particular Community Centre it is very unsightly. I believe that something has to be done to it, because Rillan Hill has been a community because of the topography of the landscape itself, much cannot be done; therefore we need to utilize the Community Centres there to ensure that some form of training goes on there, so that young people can gain a skill. Once you acquire that skill, Mr. Speaker, I believe the responsibility for creating jobs will be taken off the Government because once young people acquire skills they make themselves more employable. So, Mr. Speaker, I am sending out that urgent kind of message to the powers that be to ensure that those Community Centres are up and running.

One of the things also, Mr. Speaker, that we can do within the community to ensure that there is some form of development. I have been making the point that we have to have employment if not on a continuous basis there has to be some form of sustainable employment going on there. And one of the things that we see, Mr. Speaker, especially in the constituency of South Leeward and I have heard my other colleagues: Members for Central Kingstown and North Leeward alluding to the fact that they have rivers and there is a need for river defence. Mr. Speaker, I believe that there is what most of us might call a stream in Campden Park, but because of changes in the climate we just see what has happened in Australia. We do not know when the tide is going to change and we in St Vincent will experience such torrential rain, but in Campden Park there is that particular river that has eroded its bank, and many, many residents have been affected in so far that some of them cannot find their boundary mark.

I am certain this is something that is not unique to us. The Honourable Senator Slater, I am sure that the residents would have put that to you before. There is an urgent need for there to be some form of river defence so that the property of the people of Campden Park, in the area that we call Bollamie just opposite the said Community Center that we are talking about: so that they could have some relief. It is very difficult to acquire land now than say ten or twenty years ago. So, the people that have their property we have to ensure or we have a moral responsibility, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that they are protected.

Mr. Speaker, we will talk a lot more about community development during the budgetary debate but I just want to say a little bit on youth development. Mr. Speaker, we have heard over the years our young people being referred to as vagabonds, unschooled and untutored but we have to wonder here, Mr. Speaker, whether or not we who are in a position of authority are not responsible for this state of affairs ...

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Who called them that?

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: I said we have heard that being said.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Well, but who?

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: So, I am making the point, Mr. Speaker, that some of us in a position of authority may well be responsible for the way our young people are in our society. [Interjection] [Laughter] You can always talk; I have no problem with you and that. I mean you all have tried many, many things before to prevent me from being here; but I am here because God is on my side and I will always be vindicated. But I want to say to you the idle talk that you bring, they say for everything that a man does and every idle word that he says; he shall have to give account. I believe that and you may not get your opportunity to do it in the court but God is going to hold you accountable, so that is fine. But, Mr. Speaker, I am making the point here that our young people; I do not believe that a high enough premium is placed on the importance of our young people. I believe that within our young people by and large there is a mass - a massive mass of potential but what are we doing to tap into that mass of potential? What are we doing, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that there is a better way of life...?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Universal Secondary Education is one.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Thank you very much, Honourable Prime Minister.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Youth Empowerment Services is another one.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Thank you very much. Those are things I will get to, I may probably not get to do them tonight in the interest of time.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: No, you can stay here still one o'clock.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: No, you can stay here until one, I have ... [Laughs] Mr. Speaker, I will proceed; the point I am making here is that we have to look at our young people and we have to ensure that some form of training goes on, so that those persons that have fallen through the cracks, those persons that have become a menace to society, those persons who we think do not have any ambition...

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: So, you are saying that young people are a menace to society. Ok alright. That is what you just said: they are a menace to society.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Who we believe are. I am not saying that they are but some of us might be thinking that they are menace.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker! Mr. Speaker, if my Honourable friend will give way? My Honourable Friend stated unequivocally that we have to provide some training for some young people who have fallen through the cracks as a menace to society. Now, it is not a question that he said that anybody said so. He said that they have fallen through the cracks; they require training. Clearly, if they do not get the training they are a menace to society; that is the only point. Now, when I made that point he wants to suggest that somebody else is saying it, but he himself said it. Now he can recant from that position, he can correct himself that he did not speak with precision that is okay, I mean sometimes we all do that. But do not say that you did not say it: you said it. [Interjection] Well, you may not have heard it, you were asleep. [Laughter]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Well, he did make the reference - young people being menace to society. I did hear him say that. I think if I am to analyse what he was saying ... [Interjection] No! No! I heard it; he said that, he actually said that. There is no need for checking the Hansard on that; I heard him said that. But I thought in my own thought that he said: who we say are menace to society; that is what I thought he might have said, but he did make the point about being menace to society.

Honourable Member, let us continue with the debate. You have fifteen minutes to finish your debate.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would not require all fifteen minutes; I am going to save some [for] Senator Francis [Interjection] [Laughs] I am going to save some when we come back to debate the Budget. But, Mr. Speaker, you see I have been making the point that some of us look at young people as menaces; but I would not argue because it is not going to do us any good here, whether or not I said it or I did not say it. But the bottom line here is, Mr. Speaker, is that something has to be done. I mean it is true we might have lost some of those people, it may be too little too late to try to pull them back, you know get them ... reintegrate them into a normal life within the society but the question is what exactly are we going to do to safeguard the rest of our young people who have that potential that is untapped? What are we going to do ensure that they live a meaningful life and contribute to society in a positive way? These are the questions that we are asking ourselves. These are the questions, Mr. Speaker, that each of us who has an interest in young people must ponder on.

One of the mistakes that a lot of us make, Mr. Speaker, is what we call exclusion, we exclude our young people maybe socially, and then they start doing things which are unseemly. But how do we get that corrected? It is often said that "birds of a feather flock together". So, if there is a group of people who are excluded, Mr. Speaker, it therefore means that they are going to form themselves ... I do not know how they do that; but they form themselves into some informal union and they do the same things which are not beneficiary to the development of St Vincent and the Grenadines. So with respect to young people, Mr. Speaker, I am saying that I would love to see a concerted effort from this present administration to ensure that we do not lose any of our young people but we provide hope for them, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to wrap up probably in two or three minutes but I would not do so unless I address a matter that has to do with Local Government. Mr. Speaker, I noticed that one of the objectives here is to ensure that there is a better quality of life for communities, the people within respective communities in St Vincent and the Grenadines. I applaud that because, Mr. Speaker, the primary thing that propelled me into politics is because I want to see a better way of life for every citizen of St Vincent and the Grenadines and particularly the people of South Leeward. I will be watching very, very keenly to see whether or not 2011 would be that year when there would be a better quality of life for the citizens within these various communities.

We also noticed that there is work to be done to improve the Kingstown Bus Terminal I do not know if this is the baby of the Honourable Senator Francis; but I remember some years ago I heard him with a comprehensive plan as to how they are going to improve the Kingstown Bus Terminal ...

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: [Inaudible]

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Yes, Honourable Prime Minister, I recognised that, and I am making the point here because I am sure that in the past (I am subject to correction maybe I should not say I am sure) but with the speed with which the Honourable Senator was going in terms of having meetings and so on; having Press Conference talking about the comprehensive plan to improve the Bus Terminal; I will assume that there was also money in the Estimates for that. But this is the year of our Lord 2011 and all things remain the same. So, I am saying here, Mr. Speaker, that that particular Bus Terminal is in a state of disrepair. Well, particularly when you look at the people who own the shops and so on, many, many of them have been complaining. I will revisit this during the budgetary debate but I am only indicating to you my Honourable friend that I expect you to do something about the situation in the Bus Terminal.

Mr. Speaker, it is approaching 10:00 o'clock and it is said that you cannot have your cake and eat it, but while I have been speaking at this late hour, I am hoping that I am going to be the last speaker. [Laughs] [Interjection] Well, if there is more to come I will sit down and listen. But the point is, Mr. Speaker, we have had a fairly good debate and I believe it is because this Honourable House has shed itself of some Members on the other side by virtue of losing their seats in the last election. Probably that is why there is a more cordial and warm kind of relationship going on here. I do not want to talk too fast but I am hoping that it would continue because I am totally liquefied [Interjection] and I will sit or take the shape of my container. So, Honourable Senator Francis, I know that "*all grin teeth is not a smile*". I am saying because I take on the characteristic of liquid, I can adapt to any situation, so I say to you: bring it on.

Mr. Speaker, much obliged. [Knocking on desk]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Any further debate? Honourable Prime Minister.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to thank all Honourable Members who spoke in the Debate today. All Members in the Opposition spoke and it was a good thing I believe that the four new Members in the House on the opposition had an opportunity so to speak

to have a go in what they may well consider to be a territorial game before they face the bowling in the test match. I want to thank Honourable Members on this side of the House too who spoke, especially persons with large spending Ministries: Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Transport and Works, Urban Development and Local Government.

Mr. Speaker, there are a few matters which I would like to reply to and to join the debate a little further. I shall move through them very swiftly. Mr. Speaker, practically every Member of the Opposition has addressed this matter about the reduction of Goods and Services: the allocation. I made the point when one of the young Honourable Senators on the Opposition side was speaking that it is not everything really that you hear the Leader of the Opposition speaks that you must repeat; because it is not necessarily correct: that is the third year we are having a decline in the category: Goods and Services. Last year when he made that point I was at pains to go through the details that there was not in fact a decline because of the transference from the Central Government Accounts in the lined Ministries for Goods and Services into the Grants and Contribution Category because these entities are now statutory bodies. For instance, Goods and Services for BRAGSA constitute a very large sum, so if you take that out from the Ministry of Works and you make it as an allocation to BRAGSA it may appear that the figure is less but in real terms not, because it is accounted for elsewhere.

It is the same thing with the Grants and Contribution to the Tourism Authority, and the Community College. The Community College gets a Grant of \$12.5 million a huge portion of that is to cover Goods and Services. The Tourism Authority gets \$14 million a huge slice of that is for Goods and Services but they are not accounted for as Goods and Services. In the Government Accounts they are counted as Grant and Contributions precisely because of the transference.

Now, this year there is a very small decline in Goods and Services and as Minister of Finance I have asked all the colleagues, all the public servants for us to address this to save wastage in Goods and Services. Let us take pharmaceuticals, supplies at the Medical Stores, you would note that last year we increased the sum by nearly a million dollars: nine hundred and something thousand dollars, we have taken a little portion of that off of that increase. Why have we done this? I have discussed with the Ministry of Health officials, I said: "Look we have to find a way to save cost in goods and services at the Medical Stores". To give an example, you may have someone who would go to the Kingstown Clinic, they see a doctor and they get all their medication free or almost free at the State Pharmaceutical Services. Two days later they may see the Doctor at the Biabou Clinic or at the Retreat Clinic, they do not tell the Doctor who they saw at Biabou or Retreat that they had gone to see a doctor at Kingstown two or three days earlier. So, the Doctor at Retreat or Biabou would give them another set of medication that second set of medication is a wasted set of medication. How do you address that? By putting in place a modern medical or health information system where you link all the hospitals and all the clinics: and we are putting that system in place, it has started.

So, if Tom Jones goes to the Clinic in Kingstown, his information is entered into the database. If he goes two days later to Retreat Clinic, the Doctor would say but look: you went to a doctor and you get this medication why did you come back to us? The only information which would not be easily available on that database would be matters of a highly personal nature, which is peculiar to the physician and that patient. Like for instance in relation to a disease like HIV and AIDS where there is a level of confidentiality between the

particular patient and the particular Doctor that is one. I asked the Doctors, I said to them: “Why do we have to buy a multiplicity of pharmaceutical products, to address the same type of ailments”? And the Medical Officer of Health agrees with this: that there would be a protocol between the physicians in the state sector. In that protocol in the treatment of say level (1) and level (2) diabetes that you prescribe a particular kind of a drug: a more generic drug, which has all the ingredients; rather than a bright young doctor reading the latest journal sees another medication and says to the people at the Stores: well you should buy this because this is a better drug. By having the protocol you are able to have a body of pharmaceutical products which ... (and I am just giving examples) you will be able to purchase, which the Doctors have agreed upon that they will prescribe for the particular ailment.

If you want to go outside of that at the private Clinic to go and buy something more expensive but containing the same ingredients, well it is a free country but we must be able to provide the kind of service at a cost where we do not have the wastage. Those of us who are politicians and certainly one like me where I go into people’s homes all the time, you go into the bathroom to use it and you do not have to open the Cabinet above you, you see them there, it is like it is a mini pharmacy. How many times you see the drugs they are all wasted, who do you think is paying for them? So, that is not because you see a diminution and in this case a small diminution in Goods and Services in this year’s Budget is to strive for a greater level of efficiency in the system and to cut out wastage. The same thing with the electricity cost, communication cost and the like. So please, let us analyse the facts and what is the policy which is being directed from the facts.

I hear almost everyone has spoken about the cut in Economic Affairs category compared to 2010. You hear the figure that it has moved from \$172.9 million to \$86.9 million: there are two things here. First of all let us deal with the budgeted figures last year. There are two items which would have been covered under Economic Affairs in the Budget last year, two big ticket items: the Financial Stabilization Programme in relation to British American that is \$40 million and \$54 million for the Airport that is from the Central Government, that is \$94 million out of the one hundred and seventy odd million dollars: the \$172 million. But this year we are having \$22 million for the Airport and \$10 million for the British American Financial Assistance Programme. Again a significant drop in those two numbers because of the different circumstances but it does not mean that overall that what is there to be spent on real things for Economic Affairs would not be spent.

I want to say this and I made the point earlier, I know that I heard that Honourable Member for Central Kingstown said that he did not find this morning my presentation I think the usual brilliance or robustness or something. I do not quite know what that means because there are a number of persons on the Opposition some in the House and some outside seemed to be preoccupied with the issue of brilliance ... [Interjection] robustness? Okay, whatever the word is. The Point about it is this, the Capital Budget shorned of the three big ticket items which I outlined for last year constituting \$113 million; we are making the Capital Budget this year more focussed and with the funds attached and available for implementation. If we implement let us say, out of the one hundred and eighty something million dollars on the Capital side, if we implement fifty or sixty and if overall for the Capital Budget out of the \$176 million budgeted that we implement \$130 or \$140 we will be doing pretty well in terms of the implementation on the ground.

The last year when the NDP ran this country the Capital Budget was \$32 million actual implementation that is the fact. So, I made that point. The other thing is this that connected to the issue of Economic Affairs, Mr. Speaker, one of the things we must remember the Central Government is only one locus of spending: one locale of spending for the State Sector. VINLEC for instance has a big Capital Programme which it is carrying out, Water Authority, National Property, the Airport itself beyond the monies allocated by the Central Government. So, there are other forms of state expenditure which are not captured in the accounts of the Central Government because in fact they are in entities which have a juridical base an independent juridical personality for which their accounts are prepared separately and that is an important issue. And the connected issue is this, the State Sector: Government - Central Government and state enterprises; they are not the only players for the creation of wealth. They are important players and the thesis that we have advanced here since 2001 is that we have to provide a stimulus, whereas the Opposition is saying – why are you providing a stimulus in this way, focus on controlling the deficit?

It is the argument between Obama on the one hand and the Republicans and Tea Party people on the other. And you know that argument between the British Labour Party in the United Kingdom which was favoring the stimulus, and the emphasis taking place by the Conservatives to control the deficit to such an extent that you now having massive unemployment in the United Kingdom; and a huge increase in the contributions which have to be made to social welfare of £\$1.5 billion in excess of the existing budgeted figure and of which £\$750 million are for increase payment for unemployment benefit. That is how the debate goes. Mr. Speaker ...

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Mr. Speaker, could the Honourable Prime give way please.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Sure.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: You were absent during the period of my presentation during this evening, but you were perhaps listening. But I was on record this evening saying that I was not in favour for one minute of the contraction approach towards the Budget, if anything I favoured an expansionary budget for St Vincent and the Grenadines at this time; that was my point so your comparison is not a fair one. [Interjection]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: He said that.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, that may well be the new position of the NDP in the post leadership position of the current leader of the Opposition but that is not the official position of the Opposition. [Interjection] No! No! No! It is not; because I have heard the Leader of the Opposition repeatedly, and I do not know whether the Honourable Member for the Northern Grenadines is on your side in this debate or [Laughter] the Leader of the Opposition side. [Interjection] Well, I thought there was a side because last night I saw the three of you on television and I watched it very carefully and I was saying well one gentleman who is in the departure lounge of the NDP and the other two which one? [Interjection] Ah! You see the point about it is this when you open the can and the picong come; you want all of a sudden to adopt a defensive posture.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: It is after ten; let us get on with debating.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I agree with you. Mr. Speaker, the history of retirement benefits: both the Government and the Opposition agreed on the issue of the retirement benefit but amazingly the Leader of the Opposition throws words at the government to say we are the ones responsible for moving the country from the path of a sensible management of the retirement benefit issue because in 2000 politics cause a change. Well, when you put it shorthand like that you mask a lot of facts, the truth is this that is a stylized representation of what happened, so stylized that it is false. The truth of the matter is this, in 2000 the people having protested against the so call “greedy bill”: the Public Servants and one of their demands was among several was the return of the pension from the Consolidated Funds for those after 1993. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition, who was then Minister of Finance, came here with a Bill to remove the limitation on the Consolidated Fund Pension and restore it all. And I asked a question – “Has a study been done on this matter as to the implications”? But he was then involved in the politics of survival: that was his problem.

So when he talks about the politics, it was his politics of survival and he altered the policy, a sensible policy because he was pressured politically, those are the facts in relation to the position on retirement benefits.

Mr. Speaker, everybody again spoke about the deficit just like last year. Mr. Speaker, there is nothing wrong in running for a targeted period because of a particular circumstances, nothing wrong in either budgeting or running a deficit on the Current Account so long as it is manageable. The deficit which we budgeted for last year of \$20.5 million is a mere 1.3% of GDP; \$27 million is 1.4% (one and a half percent of GDP), it is not significant. But even where you budget for a deficit on the Current Account it does not mean it may result like that in the outturn because you can manage it over the twelve-month period, and we managed the proposed deficit over the twelve-month period last year and ended up with a small surplus of \$1.3 million on the Current Account. And as I said in my opening statement that we intend to ensure that we balance enterprise with prudence, to see how we can carry this particular item in a way which does not undermine the recovery, which is taking place in the country or cause any dislocations in the Government finances.

And the deficit for this year, let us look at the one off items, Tomas alone is in the region of \$10 million for this year, the Honourable Leader for North Leeward is saying he thinks we should have more money, of Course I could have put another \$3 million but that would have run me a deficit of \$30 million and then you would have talked about the deficit being \$30 million. I have to finance the new positions: 27 health professionals, everybody on that side of the House on the Opposition side said we must improve the Health Sector; we need to have more Health Professionals. In the Budget this year’s Budget we have 27 health professionals, we have over 20 odd other persons to be employed including persons in the judicial system and we are asked to strength the professional base of the judicial system. And I can pick out other ticket items to show you why you arrive at the deficit, would you wish me not to have put the new programmes in. Would you not wish me to have given the poor through the public assistance an additional \$4 million?

I could have had from the commencement of this a budget where I put in the Financial Summary a number which would have a surplus on the Current Account, zero increase for the poor in respect to public assistance, no additional money for housing for Tomas, none for agriculture, no increased provision for anybody in health

and so on and so forth and I could have given you but we have to make these judgments and these are the complexities in public financing in a small country where the source markets for us internationally had been having great difficulty, Europe and the United States, and that we have had two years of negative growth but we are coming now to the tail end of the International Recession, the tail end may last a year or more but we are anticipating and forecasting that we will have modest growth in this year and next year with more robust growth in subsequent years.

I cannot undermine the recovery efforts by doing something for the sake of saying I do not have a deficit and make life difficult for people in the country and that is why I am heartened to hear that Senator Leacock, sorry, I apologise the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown has embraced the position philosophically that we have been talking about for years and for which we have been fighting with the Leader of the Opposition, fighting in a sense in terms of articulation of public policy, not fighting in a physical way. Then roads, village roads, feeder roads, we need a lot more money than we have in the Budget for them, no question about it and they are for all kinds of reasons. We have a terrible topography for roads, the very majesty of our hills and the beauty of our valleys are precisely the physical contours that create difficulties for us. Then the increased number of vehicles on the roads; and the types of vehicles and the fact that hitherto the roads which were done did not have a proper base et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. The question is this, how do I balance it and how much we do? I am seeking some funds for a special programme on roads other than what we have here, but I have not secured it yet, so I cannot have it but we are putting more money to village roads and feeder roads in this year's Budget than in last year's Budget and the figures would show that.

I am very happy that the Opposition has come to the table and saying yes the 'Home Help for the Elderly' is an excellent programme. Now, I want to explain something and sometimes if you are not around long enough to observe government and this is the reason why intelligent people have to be around individuals who help to mould them, to sharpen their judgments about how government works and the way in which you can save money and put certain things together. I love the brightness of young people and the freshness of new ideas and all of that: I love it but it always has to be tempered and put in the mix with the seasoning of judgment which comes along with experience.

Now there are many, many programmes of training through a series of headings on which we can tap for training 'Home Help for the Elderly' including through the Ministry of Education the Adult and Continuing Education Programme which is a major programme. We have training which is done through the Ministry of Health so it is not because you see an absence of it under a particular heading that it does not mean there is not a presence of it or possibilities for it to be done. I heard some adverse comments about the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital and there are things about the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital which one can legitimately critique; but the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital is a very good facility for primary and secondary health. They are also part of the full crown of the public health system too, and in certain areas they have developed an expertise in this region.

We have built a partnership with the International Hospital for Children and I invite Honourable Members to go down by the Pediatric Ward and you will see inside of the Ward there are three air-conditioned structures for the preparation of children who are going to do surgery for instance an area where immediately after surgery

where they would go and a third area where after they have recovered from the immediate post-surgery they can go for further post operated care. I visited it about two months ago and while I was there, there were fifty three persons who had come in from all around the Caribbean with twenty odd children including not just children from the OECS but from Barbados and Trinidad. Yes, down at Milton Cato Memorial Hospital [Knocking on the desk] because we had sought to develop it as a specialist institution not just for pediatric care but for surgery for children including also orthopedic surgery for children. It is an amazing thing but people do not know about it, so invite Honourable Members to go.

The Health Indicators for this country are very good immunization, the question of increasing the lifespan of persons: doctors, population, nurses et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. That the Milton Cato Hospital needs a face lift? Absolutely, that is why we have money in the Budget and this is something which we have asked the Minister to address. You need to change some fascia board; you need to paint it up, one and two little things need to be fixed, you need to ensure that the toilets are in order and some of the tiles which are broken to fix them. And under the 10TH EDF Programme we have a substantial sum of money to do important repairs including to the Theatre, there are several others but that is an important area. To do the roof ...

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

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I am obliged, Mr. Speaker. To do the roof and other things down there, of course some people may say, well if you intend to move the Hospital to relocate it why do you do these improvements? You are not going to start any process of relocation until after 2013, so you need to do certain things at the moment and when we are actually going to do the relocation; the relocation is not going to take place in the next five years because you have to elaborate the plans very carefully and with the financing and so on. In the same way you noticed that I have \$4 million to spend on the E.T. Joshua Airport to continue its rehabilitation. I cannot say that the Argyle International Airport is coming and I do not do anything to E.T. Joshua, the planes have to come in there, people have to go to the Hospital for the moment. So, these are judgments which you have to make and you have to make them in the context of what are the policy objectives and you have to balance what are the resources which you have.

Land for Houses: oh! Well, this government is well known for the land for houses; especially North Leeward - ten cents a square foot land; we brought that in the North Leeward, down in Fitz Hughes, we have done it in Charles Village, we are doing it in Sharpes; the Surveyors held us up in Sharpes that is why we did not complete that before the last general election. We are doing some work up in Spring Village and I want to say to you that the Chief Surveyor has matters in hand regarding the Dark View land of which Jerrol Thompson has been very, very passionate. The Bus Terminal we have some resources, not enough but enough to start for this year. And we have resources also in the cleaning up of Kingstown. As to the youths, I think my friend from South Leeward the Honourable Member would concede that in his life, he has never seen a government which so targeted its policies to young people [Knocking on the desk] and the delivery. I will talk about that next week and many of us will talk about it, but that is part of my passion: education and youth empowerment service. You take for instance, every single year people are talking about ... time immemorial people saying; "well we must do something about a youth volunteer service and so on". Nobody has ever conceptualized it. This government conceptualized it and we put \$2.8 million to it.

It was a Capital Project because it now going for so long we say that is no Capital Programme anymore that is Recurrent; you cannot take that off the books anymore it is there, it has become part of the landscape, Youth Empowerment Service. The NDP called it Youth Exploitation Service: yes! That we can improve the Youth Empowerment Service? Of course, with the training component and we have that to do. Now something which is very dear to the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown; the Cadet Corp, I know, Mr. Speaker, he still has the name Major but it is now more of a nickname rather than a rank, because I understand that after you have been out of the business and you reach a particular year, protocol does not say you must have it as a ... that is the debate with Captain Griffith in Trinidad now. They say he must not use Captain it should be just Mr. because he has left the ranks; but I do not mind saying in the way that people say Comrade. It has become that kind of name I suspect.

But Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown; Cadets are dear to his heart very much so, he has made an important contribution in that area. But when the NDP left office just about one hundred persons were in the Cadet Corp, we now have 800 including a Marine Wing and the numbers are rising. I can go on and on about what we have done in respect of the youths that we have persons who my Honourable Friend from the Valley has said: the Leeward, Vermont Valley that [Inaudible] falling through the cracks. We have done a study a study of what we call 'Youths on the Blocks' and we are doing some work in that area to bring them on. We have done some work among the street children and we are bringing them on. That these problems are going to be with us as we go along in life? Yes! My friend has quoted the scriptures a lot but it is in the nature of life that we are going to have difficulties and challenges. Indeed, the Book of Job teaches that very well, but what we have to do is not to mourn over them, not to whine over them, not to throw your hands up in the air with a sense of learned helplessness. What we do, we analyse the situation and see how we can go forward and turn setbacks into advances and that is the spirit of this government; that is the spirit of our people, our people being very good natured. Maybe Senator Leacock, sorry I apologise the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown was perhaps commenting about my lack of a particular style of something this morning to which he has been accustomed; maybe as the French Existentialist Albert Camus says, "*Style is like fine Silk it often hides eczema*" and if there was an absence of style this morning do not pull me over the coals for it, because those who may have some style may well have eczema because like fine silk it often hides eczema.

The truth of the matter is that we have run this country for ten years and we have had two terms and I say this to you Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, there is a certain liberating quality about a third term because it is reserved for very special people. [Laughter] It is reserved for very special people: only very special people get third terms and a win is a win ...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Prime Minister you

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I am winding up, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR SPEAKER: Well wind up for me please.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: You know a little earlier I made the point grown men and women must accept a fundamental truth about politics, it is not a beauty contest; you do not get a prize for Miss Congeniality; you do not get a prize for Miss Photogenic; you do not get a prize for the best swim year or evening wear. There is no second runner up prize; there is no first runner up prize; there is only one prize for the man who comes first. When you come second you do not get a prize you carry a prize and the prize you bear is for not coming first and quietly prepare yourself for sixty months before 2015 when the bell rings again. That is what it is about and unless you accept that persons are likely to end up being somewhat schizophrenic. It is the reality of politics.

I have heard the Member of Central Kingstown said on the 29th December, when we were here, Mr. Speaker, he said, “You were say what you want but I am here for five years”; and I accept that [Laughter] The Leader of the Opposition said, “We are going to be there for only one year”. I see that on a political question too you have a fundamental difference with him, in economics and in politics. I am glad that we share the identical perspective as we go forward. Mr. Speaker I beg to move ...

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: I know you want [Inaudible]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: [Laughs] I beg to move ...

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Nah!

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Because you said on a show that: “There are some men who cannot win their seats who want to be leader” [Laughter] and you also said “In one generation it is unlikely that the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines would look across the Bequia Straits for another man there”. I heard these comments [Interjection] I said I heard them. The first one you have not denied. [Laughter]

Mr. Speaker; Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the operative section of this Motion which I read in full earlier today.

“Be it resolved that this Honourable House of Assembly do adopt the Estimates for the Financial Year ending the 31st December, 2011.

And be it further resolved note the projects for the financial years ending 31st December, 2012 and the 31st December, 2013”.

I so move.

Question put and agreed

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I thought you wanted a division to see that twelve is more than; how many you have over there five?

APPROPRIATION BILL 2011

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, I think that the Rules suggest that I ought not to move the first reading today. May I have the Standing Order?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: No you are not to read it.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Sixty two: two.

“After the Appropriation Bill has been introduced and read a first time the Motion for the second reading of the Bill shall be proposed forthwith and the Minister of Finance shall make his annual Financial Statement or Budget Speech”.

So, if I do the first reading now I will have to make my speech immediately.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: [Inaudible]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: [Laughs] I do not know if I should do that tonight. You are ready; [Laughs] you are ready to wait? Mr. Speaker, I think I will wait on Monday when I do the first reading, and then proceed to the second reading and do the Budget Speech.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Honourable House do stand suspended, until Monday the 24th at 4:00 p.m.

**Question put and agreed to
House suspended at 10:34 p.m.
Until Monday 24th January
At 4:00 p.m.**