

No. 7

Tuesday

First Session

22nd November, 2011

Ninth Parliament

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

ADVANCE COPY

OFFICIAL REPORT

CONTENTS

Tuesday 22nd November, 2011

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| Prayers | 6 |
| Obituaries | 6 |
| Congratulatory Remarks | 10 |
| Minutes | 14 |
| Statements by Ministers | 16 |
| Papers | 18 |
| Questions for Oral Answers | 18 |
| Bills | 57 |
| Resolution | 82 |

THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE SEVENTH 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.

FOURTEENTH SITTING

22ND NOVEMBER 2011

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

The Honourable House of Assembly met at 10:15 a.m. in the Assembly Chamber, Court House, Kingstown.

PRAYERS

MR. SPEAKER IN THE CHAIR

Honourable Hendrick Alexander

Present

MEMBERS OF CABINET

Prime Minister, Minister of Finance,
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 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

ABSENT

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade

And Consumer Affairs

Honourable Dr. Douglas Slater

Government Senator

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY 22ND NOVEMBER, 2011

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Hendrick Alexander read the prayers of the House. Pray be seated.

OBITUARIES

HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON: Honourable Members, I rise today to offer condolences to first of all Mrs. Clarice Catherine Thomas better known as Mother from Calder. She was born in Georgetown in the O'Brien's Valley and attended the Dickson Methodist School. She was a classmate of Carol Campbell Brereton a renowned educator here in St Vincent and the Grenadines; she later married Vincent Thomas of Calder a very prominent business man here in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

She was a very humble lady, she started off being a seamstress and she sewed her clothing for all her children. Thomas wholesale of Arnos Vale today is a testimony of the tremendous hard work and dedication that this family had throughout St Vincent and the Grenadines. She was buried on the 29th October at the St Sylvan's Anglican Church at Stubbs. Her daughter Pearly is an ex educator of over 42 years and all the other children went into business.

Dolly operates the family business, now at Arnos Vale; Ken is into the hotel business; and Pat, Rhona, into Bar Restaurant; Elme, Grocery and Restaurant; and Maureen she lives in Canada. Many grandchildren and great grandchildren former Senator in this Honourable House, Ronald Marks is a grandchild.

I want to also express condolences on the passing of two centurions in the constituency, first of all Miss. Muriel Alexander of South Union she lives at the end of the South Windward constituency. She died at the age of 101 and was buried last Saturday at the Lowman's Windward Cemetery.

Third person: Miss Victoria Arabella Ryan who would have celebrated 102 years on the 18th of in December, sorry. She was born in Bridgetown in my own home town but moved to live in Argyle where she was a prominent farmer there. She worked many of her lands in Calder planting peanuts and so on. Her funeral would be at the Biabou Methodist Church on Saturday coming at 2:00 in the afternoon.

And in a very sad note, Mr. Speaker, one of the stalwarts of the Unity Labour Party in the constituency Ms Juanita Nanton, she is from Sandy Bay but moved to live with her daughter Meena at Breezy Hill in Stubbs. The reports are such that she ... her daughter Meena who strives small business selling at the Primary School at Stubbs left her mother home yesterday and when to do her a do and later when she got home and went into the house to look for her mother she found her sadly hanging outside of the house with a sheet apparently wrapped around her neck. I want to, on behalf of the entire constituency and the Unity Labour Party, to express our profound condolences to the passing of these persons in the constituency. May their souls rest in peace; much obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, for West St George.

HONOURABLE CECIL MCKIE: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Member, I rise to offer condolences to the Hull family of Villa on the passing of Mrs. Elma Theodore Hull she passed away last Friday at the ripe age of 85 years. She was known to many as Mother Hull or Mom Elma and she would have made an outstanding contribution to the development of her community and St Vincent and the Grenadines. In fact, she had six children all still alive, four girls and two boys and they have also continued in the tradition of outstanding contribution to the community and to St Vincent and the Grenadines.

In fact, many a developmental discussions would have been held at mother Hull's home at Villa and in fact, I can probably identify with those discussions as part of my launch into my political career today. So, on behalf of all of us we want to extend condolences to the Hull family. The funeral will take place this Saturday at 3:00 p.m. at the Kingstown Methodist Church and unto the Kingstown Cemetery. Much obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable Member for Central Kingstown.

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and to my parliamentary colleagues. I rise just to recognize two deaths, Mr. Speaker, and I associate with those obituaries that have been expressed by Members on the other side to the various persons.

I speak first, Mr. Speaker, here in the city of a stalwart in community service of virtually every kind, I refer to the passing sometime ago; because there has been a little gap between our last session and this session; of one known in the city as Sonny King that is his alias and a beautiful eulogy was painted of him in the Anglican Church by Dougie 'Nose' Joseph. He is a retired Attendant I believe of the Kingstown Hospital, and Sonny King is one of those persons who would have been in football as a footballer, in football as referee; he would have been in Carnival with Mass Band Nelson Bloc and before that Fuzzie out of Paul's Lot. Sonny King would have been involved virtually in every fire they had in Kingstown, he was a fireman's, fireman and he also was Mr. Carnival Tent in lyrics in particular in Pit with others like Pinchum and Marty and those guys who make Carnival season what it was at the Victoria Park for various semi-finals. And of course a fixture there in Paul's Avenue, I think he resided in the Gibson Corner Area and suffered some pain before his passing.

To the best of my record he is a strong Labour man as I understand it but a Vincentian first and foremost, a very decent soul and I just want to recognise his significant contribution to St Vincent in other circumstances I am sure he is a person would have been qualified for some honour or some kind if we had local honours in place by this time in St Vincent and the Grenadines. To his bereaved family and friends I just want to recognise his passing.

And then just yesterday, Mr. Speaker, we in Walker Pierce Montrose my old village laid to rest nurse Fraser Colly Fraser's wife, she made a great contribution to nursing in St Vincent and the Grenadines through the length and breadth of this country in all forms and fashion, she had some rough times in her last years but I am sure that the good Lord would be kind on her family and may they, Mr. Speaker, rest in peace.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Honourable Prime Minister. Just a minute; I think for the record could you remember Sonny's correct name?

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Speaker, I do not think Sonny King would want his name correct, you know. [Laughter]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: That is excellent, you do not know [Laughs] thank you, Honourable Prime Minister.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I first of all would like to recognise and acknowledge the passing of Justice Odel Adams who was a Judge in the Supreme Court in the Eastern Caribbean; Guyanese by birth but a Caribbean National to the core. He served us very well in this region, a very distinguished Judge; I would expect that in another forum full respect would be paid to the quality of his judgments and his skill and temperament as a judicial officer. I really simply want here to pay the respect by acknowledging and recognizing his passing and his important contribution.

Mr. Speaker, I have communicated with the family, the widow through a former Solicitor General in this country, we all appeared before Justice Odel Adams, I speak of former Solicitor General, former Acting DPP Oscar Ramjeet who had informed me by email of the death of Justice Adams and he attended the funeral and he communicated on behalf of the Government and people of St Vincent and the Grenadines and on my own behalf our condolences to the widow and family.

Mr. Speaker, I want to join the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown in recognizing the passing and acknowledging the great contribution of Sonny King. He was a good friend of mine, a country man who came to town and involved himself in sports and culture. I remember him in the early days as a very enthusiastic lines man and then of course a referee at football matches and he did yoeman service to this country at the hospital, where though he was not a professional health worker, he had the respect of everyone by virtue of his demeanor and the conscientiousness of his work. It was fitting that the tribute be paid by Dougie Nose Joseph a patriotic Vincentian and well known Mass man who would have known Sonny quite well in his work in Carnival. We on behalf of the Government and people of St Vincent and the Grenadines and also on behalf of the Labour family we want to extend our condolences to his family and friends. May he rest in peace.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, Honourable Senator, you gave way to seniority [Laughs] Honourable Senator David Browne.

HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I stand to give condolences to the family of George Fredericks of the Vermont Valley, a farmer by profession and a Labour comrade. Mr. Speaker, George who I would have met about a year or so ago; a humble man and he constantly spoke of the work of old Labour and the current Prime Minister. He has produced nine excellent children some of whom are farmers today, strong farmers in the valley and others excellent skills in masonry, carpentry and so forth.

I spoke to his wife recently and her feeling, yes, that of sadness but she choose a moment to speak about this government development within her family life. She reminded me of her husband salary of \$85 a fortnight and she taunted how much money she is getting for the assistance of the burial of her husband. George would be sadly missed, Mr. Speaker, arrangements are currently being made for Saturday 3.00 o' clock at Pembroke Anglican Church. I stand on behalf of the Unity Labour Party and this government wishing her strength and giving her the necessary support during this period. I am much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Central Leeward, I recognise you.

HONOURABLE MAXWELL CHARLES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to convey condolences to the Miller's family of Layou on the passing of little twelve years old Stephan Miller whose remains were found in the Mountains on the outskirts of Layou. It was a particularly sad day in Layou after he went missing for over five or six weeks. I visited the parents and offered my condolences and we would also know that he is the nephew of the former Representative Sir Louis Straker of Central Leeward. Again condolences; and we want Steph his mother that we stand to give her the necessary support as time goes on.

Secondly, we would have heard of the electrocution of a young mother Desiree Primus who was electrocuted in the Campden Park area. Young mother of four, a very sad day it was. I remember speaking at her funeral some weeks ago. Desiree is somebody I knew from birth, she was born in my village Buccament Bay, the paternal side of her family all Buccament people and the other side of her family all belong to Layou. We again are urged to support through prayers and otherwise the children whom they are for.

Also, I learn not too long ago the passing of one Vera Miller of Back Street in Layou. She passed away in North America. Somebody again that I knew, she lived about twenty feet from the church where we worship at in Layou, so I use to see her every week. Very sad feelings I have this morning as I offer condolences to her family especially her mom, a very good friend of mine Luenda Smith of Layou.

And last but not least, I leant also of the passing of Junior Hazelwood also of Layou, condolences again to his family. I think he would be buried this Saturday here in Layou. Much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Senator and Minister of Works.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer condolences and to join with my other colleagues in the passing of Mrs. Thomas, mother of a very fantastic group of individuals all of the names which the Honourable Minister called out.

And I did not realise that George Fredericks of Vermont had died and as one country man speaking of another, I do not think it is improper to say what is Sonny King's real name is and I share condolences with his family Leroy Bailey is his official name but everybody in Kingstown would know him as Sonny King and he can sign a cheque Sonny King and nobody in the Bank would question it.

But Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer condolences to the family of one Searaft Trumpet of Long Wall a very flamboyant and boisterous young man, the heart of the quarry and Long Wall community, and Crappo and Spooky would be the only two names I would call because the names are so many in that area but if you did not see him before with Spooky you would see him with Crappo. And he died under very sad circumstances in the matter of a stabbing down on Bay Street. Chronic is well known for his support of the Unity Labour Party and in particular when I ran in 2005, he was very much on the frontline. He would leave a gaping hole in that community, his mom, wife and kids. In fact, Searaft's name is S-E-A-R-A-F-T, his father having been a seaman; I think he named him Searaft. I see it spelt Seraph but it is really S-E-A-R-A-F-T. And he was really proud when I first met him to tell me how his name was spelt.

I think his sister is also named Seado or Sea something, I cannot remember the other name. The father spent a lot of time on the seas and felt that he had to keep those very close to him as close as he was to the sea. He will be buried on Saturday at the Mormon Church in Kingstown Park and I take this opportunity to extend

condolences and greetings to all the people in that area Quarry, Long Wall, Town Hill, Up Street, Sharp Street and in particular to his mom and his wife and kids. May all these souls rest in peace; thank you.

CONGRATULATORY REMARKS

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

HONOURABLE CLAYTON BURGIN: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to congratulate two wonderful ladies who at the ripe age of being a 100 at this present moment, Mr. Speaker, Maude ‘tante Merle’ Cadogan is celebrating her 105th birthday [knocking on desk] she is a wonderful lady worked hard her life. One of the things that I noticed about her, Mr. Speaker, is that she is seeing much better than you and I because she is not using glasses up to this time in her life you know, wish I had that kind of vision. But I think myself and the Honourable Member for East Kingstown, the Opposition Leader we have prospect of a long life because all of us are living in the same corridor, the southeast corridor so Mr. Speaker, you may have to return home.

I also want to express congratulation also to Elaine Ollivierre who was a 102, 2nd November another lovely and wonderful lady all of them have their full faculty in place and they are striving quite well at this present moment. So once again happy birthday to those two wonderful ladies. Much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

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

HONOURABLE SABOTO CAESAR: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this morning I rise to congratulate and to celebrate with Miss Marie Theobalds of Mount Grenan. She is celebrating 101 years, so whilst I listen to the Member for East St George speaking about the number of persons in his constituency and he made the invitation to the Leader of the Opposition and to the Speaker; well the Leader of the Opposition lives there but he also own lands in Mount Grenan and this lady is from Mount Grenan as well. So, I also want to tell him he is invited to South Central.

Miss Marie Theobalds was an extremely hard worker dedicating most of her working life to farming particularly on the San Souci Estate planting arrowroot. She is a woman of great mental strength and fortitude and Mr. Speaker, her life is an expression of the contribution of the remarkable work of women in agriculture in St Vincent and the Grenadines. Sometimes when we speak about agriculture we only see the work and the labour of the men but historically women would have done significant work in agriculture. I just want to wish Miss Marie Theobalds and her family Sylvina and others the very best and continued health and may God continue to sustain and keep her.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to congratulate Cleopatra Jackson of South Central Windward and New Grounds who received the St Vincent and the Grenadines Award for the recently concluded FCIB Unsung Hero Competition [Applause]. Mr. Speaker, this award is given to persons who have made a significant contribution to their community and to nation building. Cleopatra Jackson is a teacher a mentor, a community leader and activist, a mother, a counselor and a care giver. She is the ninth of fifteen children and she started to teach at the very tender age of fourteen at the Lowman’s Windward Anglican School. She taught for forty years and she taught at the Lauders Primary School for twenty years from 1974 to 1994. She travelled by foot, Mr. Speaker, during the

vacation from school to give extra lessons to Common Entrance students. She taught at New Grounds Primary School for ten years from 1994 to 2004. A Common Entrance for all these years, she helped her school gain the first place nationwide in 2004, something that is very significant in the constituency of South Central Windward, the first time and definitely not the last time that a student sitting the Common Entrance has copped the position of first place.

She is involved in several community groups and presently is the Chairman of a group by the name of NGACALCOG (New Grounds, Adelphi, and Chapham's Adult Literacy Coordinating Group). She is a devoted Methodist and she is a leader of the Ladies Fellowship. She visits and helps to take care of the elderly and she is also the caretaker of her 96 years old mother. She has one son but has cared for many children. Many of the children that she would have cared for housed or taught have gone on to become proficient and productive members for society. She has indeed proven to the world that she possesses that rare combination of personal sacrifice, determination and consistency to make a significant and lasting impact in her community and her country. On behalf of this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, I want to wish Cleopatra Jackson my sister, my friend all the very best in her future endeavours, I am obliged. [Knocking on desk]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Central Kingstown.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members of this House. Mr. Speaker, I want to use the occasion of our National Independence and recent football activity to address two matters and I trust it really comes over in a congratulatory way, because that is the intention. But also to speak to in one instance a correction I think we need to make in this House, Mr. Speaker. So, I will address first the Independence Parade in which I want to offer the most sincere congratulations to the troops and other participants who annually go to the Victoria Park to pay homage to our Independence celebration.

Mr. Speaker, you know that I am on record as saying that notwithstanding the rambunctious nature of our parliamentary activities and divisive nature of our politics, the things that unite us as a nation is far greater than those that divide us and I believe the Independence Parade is one of those unifying activities. And while I may be in danger of offending a number of people, Mr. Speaker, it is really my hope that more of us are able to be at that Independent Parade as well as our Memorial Parade, as we call it the Poppy's Day Parade. It is really a time when we as parliamentarians must lead from in front but having said that, Mr. Speaker, this year's parade and I think I drew it to your attention privately, there was an incident that offended me for one who has been at parades for over fifty years: Independence, Queens birthday, Poppy's Day going back.

When I arrived at that parade Mr. Speaker, I was prevented from parking by a Sergeant in the police force who was drawing to my attention that that was reserved parking for special guest et cetera. I had Ms. Viola John in my car at the time and she took up the issue even before him, before I did sorry, and had that officer correct the disrespect. But it did not end there, Mr. Speaker, when I went into the pavilion to take my seat and I brought some of them here to draw to your attention, Mr. Speaker. The protocol things and this might be the Foreign Affairs Ministry responsibility; we have to get it right, Mr. Speaker, [Holding up reserved label] this is Mr. T Ollivierre, his seating; Mr. Nigel Stephenson, that is his seating; Mr. Cummings, his seating; Mr. Friday, his seating; not even Dr. Friday. Honourable Julian Francis and that was characteristic of all Members of the House that day, all Members of this side were Misters and all on the other side were Honourables. It may be slight but the protocol of it must be very, very seriously address and I want to draw it to the protocol department of

Foreign Affairs, the Ministry I believe with responsibility. It may not have been deliberate but we must get as sometimes we say the little things right, I leave it at that stage, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to football a potential industry here in St Vincent and the Grenadines we did not do so well this year in our World Cup sojourn, perhaps our worst performance ever, but I want to acknowledge the sterling contribution of one Corne Huggins who has played for the national team here and abroad and professional football for the last twenty years also and who captained the team but did not play the final game because I think there were some penalties he had to serve. Corne Huggins came from a distinguish sporting family the Huggins twins The Ladies of Yesteryear Netball and Fred [inaudible] Trimmingham also for football and cricket so he came from a strong sporting lineage out of that Murray's Village Rockies area.

And people like Corne Huggins must be recognized in this country for 20 years and the others of course "Thirsty" out of Bequia and "Buju", "Butu", sorry from the Stubbs area. I singled Corne because on this occasion he captained the team during this World Cup sojourn. I just want to recognize his sterling contribution to St Vincent through the sport of football and wish him well in any further activities. I believe he has now taken into coaching, and I hope he has equal success in that activity. Much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Prime Minister, Oh! Sorry [laughs] I might have missed the Honourable Member for West Kingstown.

HONOURABLE CECIL MCKIE: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to offer special congratulations to a partnership just hosted the most valuable medical mission to St Vincent and the Grenadines [Applause] a partnership between the World Paediatric Project formerly the International Hospital for Children, the Rotary Club for St Vincent South, the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment, the Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines, many other individuals and the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines, which combined to have one week of clinics that saw some 80 or so children performed 10 surgeries, 8 of them Scoliosis surgeries. That Mission also saw 20 children coming from three other Caribbean countries and emphasized the importance of this project to St Vincent and the Grenadines and the region. In all the World Paediatric Project they would have had some seven missions to St Vincent and the Grenadines during the course of this year. We hosted some fifteen missions and an initial value of this mission would have placed it at over \$2 million, significant indeed.

This project started many years ago and the intention is for it to develop much more. It has become the hub for the rest of the Caribbean and a lot of our children would depend on these medical interventions for many years to come. Once again, congratulations on this very special mission. Much obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Prime Minister.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I would first of all like to join with all other colleagues here in Parliament who have congratulated the respective persons especially those who have spoken before on this side of the House and of course the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown.

I would like to add, Mr. Speaker, congratulations to Dr. Orlando Smith and his National Democratic Party in the British Virgin Islands for returning into office. The BVI is an associate member of the OECS and we do a lot of work together. I want to acknowledge the tremendous work for the region and for Vincentians who are in the British Virgin Islands; work which was done by Ralph O'Neil the immediate pass Premier and his Virgin Island Party. He is really a Caribbean man. Dr. Orlando Smith or Smithy to me because we were in University together; like I taught his wife at University in an introductory course in government, she herself is a distinguished professional and a consultant here on matters of international financial sector and they got back into office. Clearly the economic challenges facing the BVI in the current world circumstances they have had their impact along with other local circumstances.

Similarly, I want to congratulate the new government in Spain, the conservative government which defeated the Social Democratic Party headed by the Prime Minister Zapatero. It is the worst defeat that the Social Democrats has suffered for 30 years, again the international economic crisis has taken its toll; in fact it has taken its toll across the world in electoral and other terms. There are one and two governments who have been fortunate to escape the political fallout from the economic crisis. I do not want to name all of them but we know some of them. [Interjection] Well, you had an opportunity in 2010 I did not want to say St Vincent and the Grenadines but you [laughingly] put your mouth in it, we withstood it! We withstood it! So, you begged for that [laughs] I did not want to introduce the politics in this particular congratulation but clearly these are trying times and we have seen the fallout certainly recently in the BVI and in Spain.

Mr. Speaker, I want to offer congratulations to Renwick Rose for his award of the Guardian International Achievement Award; a significant international award [Applause], it is on the front page this morning in the Searchlight. I conveyed privately through his wife but I did not want to say anything ... I could not catch Renwick because he was on the road overseas and I did not want to say anything publicly, we knew before and he knew before but now it is on the front page of Searchlight, it is important that I acknowledge that contribution. I am sure that there would be many occasions in the next few weeks when we can all celebrate with a very distinguished Vincentian.

Renwick is very special to me, Renwick Rose is very special to me; we went to Grammar School in the same year and we left in the same year and we have been political comrades in arms in YULIUMO, in the UPM and we went our own way for a short while and I know he appreciates the work which this government is doing and I also appreciate his tremendous contribution. I do not want to say any more now because we have a lot of things on our Agenda today but I want to acknowledge his extraordinary contribution thus far, and I am sure the farmers of this country would be most pleased with this international award because it has been built in part on his tremendous work with the farmers in St Vincent and the Grenadines and the Windward Islands and really in the Caribbean broadly.

Mr. Speaker, I want in addition to joining the Honourable Minister of Health with his congratulations of World Paediatric for their volunteers those who have been here on the World Paediatric Project and the magnificent contribution that they have been making. I really want to join him in recognising and acknowledging the quality of their work. The Ministry of Health of St Vincent and the Grenadines we have a policy in the Government of seeking niches of support. We have it from the Americans based in Virginia in the World Paediatric Project, we have it with the Cubans with the Cuban Mission, and we have it now also since last year with the Christian Hospital of Taiwan and they are currently here. I just met the delegation; there are nine of them who are going

to be here for three weeks. I just met them shortly before I came to Parliament and last week we had a social event at the official residence of the Prime Minister for our friends from the World Paediatric Project and we are having on Thursday night one for our friends from Taiwan because I think we have to show appreciation at the highest level for these acts of solidarity and Christian fellowship and their generosity. It is as simple as that and when people come to help us with our health and our well being we have to appreciate it very much.

Mr. Speaker, if I may just mention one matter in the absence of the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs who is overseas on government business, I would take up with the Permanent Secretary when I return the issue that the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown raised in terms of the protocol issue. I am quite sure as he has put it quite kindly that there was no real disrespect intended but I think we have to get these things right. I can complain, Mr. Speaker, of certain things which have been done on other matters where I have seen this problem with inattention to protocol and some of them which do not touch and concern me in any personal way I raise them, those which touch and concern me I simply smile [laughs] because I have come to the earth and the earth I will return. Of course persons who hold offices ought to be accorded the requisite protocol respect and the like.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much Honourable Prime Minister. Very often I do not comment on of these matters but the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown raised it and the Honourable Prime Minister thought it was important enough as he, himself to comment on it. Well, I am sure it is well known that I am a stickler for good protocol and I have gone to functions and I have had the occasion to the former Cabinet Secretary Mr. Brendon Brown that protocol seems to be walking on its head in this country and the event to which, of which the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown spoke, I also as he indicated to me what happened on that very day, I also commended to him in a lighthearted way that I am also one of those persons who came in for what you may call abuse of protocol in relation to what took place on that particular day. But I think this is something that we need to pay serious attention to because it could be very, very embarrassing to our country and to us as individuals; and it is something that we have to pay very serious attention to.

I remember there was an occasion last Carnival, I think it was when the Honourable Minister of Culture had to comment on some protocol being used, the manner in which protocol was abused as I should say at a certain function. And I also have been to a function at the Ministry of Education and I must say very often and I am sorry to say this, very often that area must pay very serious attention to protocol as well. And I think it is important enough for us to sit back and pay some serious attention to the manner in which protocol is dispensed here in this country. Thank you very much.

CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES

HONOURABLE MR SPEAKER: Honourable Prime Minister

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move that the Minutes of the sitting of this Honourable House held on Thursday 29th September and Tuesday 18th October, 2011 be confirmed.

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: I second.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member sorry. Correction – page?

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Page 20, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Page 20 of the Minutes.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: At the top, the first highlighted section, I am not at the present moment the Minister of Health.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: At the present moment.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: I am not at the present moment the Minister of Health.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: [Laughs]

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Therefore at the top of page 20 when the Honourable Mr. Speaker, the person he would have called there the Honourable Minister of Health not Member for West Kingstown. It is for the record, Mr. Speaker. Further, Mr. Speaker, when the Minutes relating to ... when you read the report from doctor what is his name, the Minutes do not reflect that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition made a comment noting: that he has just seen it and he would require time to respond to it. The Minutes I think is therefore quite incomplete and the comment of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition ought to be correctly included in the Minutes, I would submit.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay, well, that we will ... of course, the Clerk will look into that.

**Question put and agreed to
Minutes confirmed with the necessary amendments**

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: No announcement please. Honourable ...

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Please, Mr. Speaker, I thought you were going to make an announcement, because I would want with your permission at this time, Mr. Speaker, since it is my understanding that this is likely to be the last sitting of this session of the ninth parliament, early in this parliament, Mr. Speaker, I was accused falsely by the Leader of the government business in relation to a

statement pertaining to the Diagnostic Center yet to be established in Georgetown. I recalled very vividly, Mr. Speaker, that not only did you not correct the Honourable Prime Minister by stating categorically that you heard me made the statement. I indicated then, Mr. Speaker, that I never made such a statement and that in the natural course of justice, if the evidence cannot be provided to show that I did make such a statement it is the requirement that the Honourable Prime Minister and who ever endorsed such a statement in the absence of providing that evidence which I continue to say cannot exist because it never happened, I ask at this point in time before this session is finished that the corrective action be kindly taken.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I clearly understood what you have said that issue I still have not seen the evidence to make a judgment on and I am not in a position at this time to do it.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Mr. Speaker, with respect the precedent has been set, if the evidence cannot be provided the requirement is that the statement be withdrawn. I have been subjected to that repeatedly and I kindly ask you to consider this aspect.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: We will consider it Sir, Honourable Member, Honourable Member.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Mr. Speaker, may I ask is it possible therefore that this can be held over until the next sitting of parliament, because this is the last sitting of this session and that is why I raised it. I have patiently waited nearly a year and I have seen or heard no action on your part and I ask would it be possible because Mr. Speaker, the matter here is my own reputation.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay. Honourable Member I would look into that I cannot answer you that right now, I would look into it and let you know. Honourable Member.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Mr. Speaker, this is a related matter, in fact it is identical to the issue raised by the Honourable Member for West Kingstown. You would recall that I too had raised an issue regarding a statement that the Honourable Member for South Leeward had made in this parliament, and the Prime Minister had objected to it and said in the paraphrasing that he hadn't said those words. You also ruled in favour of the Prime Minister and asked the Honourable Member to withdraw the remarks. It was a remark about persons pursuing persons in the hills until they exist no more, you remember that. And subsequent sitting of the House I asked for your ruling on it and I told you that we have copy of the statements that were made by the Honourable Prime Minister that the Member for South Leeward was referring to and the statements that were made here in the House and I offered to provide them to you and you said you would get them. I assumed that you would do it in your own way and I too waited, and I think all the Members on this side of the House and particularly the Member for South Leeward for your ruling on the matter, because he was in a very public way rebuked in this House for something that he thought he was right about; and the evidence indicate that he was correct about.

And I think that it is important that the record of this House shows that the statement that he had made was correct, at least, Mr. Speaker, that you ruled on it. If you think having looked at the evidence that is presented that the statement was not made by the Honourable Prime Minister and he is still wrong well that is your ruling but I do not think that the matter should be just allowed to...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Bur I thought you said that I had ruled on the matter.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: That you had ruled?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: That is what you said in your opening statement.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: No you hadn't ruled Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: But you said that in your opening statement that I had ruled on the matter.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Yes, you ruled in the matter in favour of the Prime Minister then I raised the issue and other Members on this side that your ruling was incorrect. You have not ruled on our objection to your ruling and we offered to provide the evidence but you still which we still have, Mr. Speaker, and I will be willing to provide it. You can play it in the House, you can listen to it in your office and then you can make a determination on it.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay, provide me with the evidence and I will make a determination at some point.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Because, Mr. Speaker, when you hadn't accepted the offer before I thought you had access to the information.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I will deal with those things subsequently.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Prime Minister, do you?

DR. HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: No. No statements.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay. Could we have an adoption of the Order Paper to include Report of Select Committee? We have Select Committee Report right?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Yes, I have got the Papers No. 5 of 2011. Mr. Speaker, in addition to those, those would be [break in transmission] but in respect of the Select Committee to examine the Financial Services Authority Bill, I beg to lay before this Honourable House the Minutes of the Select Committee and the Report of the Select Committee. They have been circulated already.

PAPERS

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Before we do that could I just move that we adopt the amendment to the Order Paper

Question put and agreed to

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Clarification on one matter. My humble understanding is that the Public Accounts Committee is a committee of the House.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: A committee of the House.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: And ought to also make a report to the House if there is a meeting? I just wondered.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Well, they should. I do not know if there is a timeframe in which that should be done, of course a committee of the House and of course there should be a report.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: My understanding both of the law and in this regard the convention is that the report is made immediately prior to the Annual Report, immediately prior to the commencement or at the commencement of the new session of parliament that is to say after the House is prorogued and the proclamation for the resumption before the Estimates that such a report is made in writing.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay, I must acknowledge that I am not quite familiar with the rules in relation to the reporting regarding the Public Accounts Committee when and how it is being done but I am sure we would like to accept the word of the Honourable Prime Minister and of course look into that and I believe the report will be made at the appropriate time. Okay, Honourable Member, right. Is it Statements by Ministers?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: No, No, he is laying the Report.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Oh! Oh! Sorry, all right.

HONOURABLE MAXWELL CHARLES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, as Minister responsible for information, I would like to lay before this Honourable House the Financial Statement for the National Broadcasting Corporation; Statements for the years ending December 31st, 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008. I am obliged, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION FOR ORAL ANSWERS

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question No. 1 from the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

1. *The Honourable Arnhim Eustace, Leader of the Opposition asked the Honourable Prime Minister of Finance, National Security, Economic Development, Grenadines and Legal Affairs:-*

Will the Honourable Prime Minister please indicate the fiscal overrun for the Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines for the period January-October 31st, 2011 as compared with the same period in 2010?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Prime Minister.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Total Revenue and Grants 2011, \$416.8 million and I will round it off rather than saying .789 million and I will do that for all the numbers. \$416.8 million compared to \$402.6 million last year for the period ending 31st October, 2011. Current Revenue \$377.4 million compared to \$391.3 million, the first one \$377.4 million.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Comparative figures you said?

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

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: What is the comparative figure you said: \$377.4 million?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I am calling 2011 first, October 2011, \$377.4 million against \$391.3 million, and for total Revenue and Grants, if I may just go over that it is \$416.8 million for the 2011, \$402.6 million for 2010. In respect of the Capital Revenue and Grant well, you can do the simple subtraction and you will see that it is \$39.4 million for Capital Revenue and Grants. Total Expenditure \$453 million, sorry may I just say the Capital Grants comparable for last year \$11.3 million. Total Expenditure \$453 compared to \$434.6 last year. Recurrent Expenditure \$412.5 compared to \$396.5. Capital Expenditure \$40.5 million compared to \$38.1 million. The Current Balance -\$35.1 million compared to -\$5.2 million. And the overall balance -\$36.3 million compared to -\$32million.

Mr. Speaker, may I just say and the Honourable Leader of the Opposition would appreciate this because he has dealt with these matters. When we give these if something is out of whack by a few million dollars sometime it has to do with reportage, like for instance, I know the \$5 million from the Rapid Credit Facility of the IMF has not been in the account yet and there is Capital monies still to be accounted for but what the figures do give you is that everything being equal in each year we look at the trend; that is the important question which is at stake and I think my Honourable Friend would recognise this.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary? Question No. 2; Honourable ... okay.

2. *The Honourable Arnhim Eustace, Leader of the Opposition asked the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, National Security, Economic Development, Grenadines and Legal Affairs.*

Can the Honourable Prime Minister please indicate how many firms have shown interest in taking over the Life Insurance Portfolio of British American Insurance Company?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Prime Minister.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, we have I think in the circumstances made very good progress, seven firms. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition would appreciate that I cannot name the firms; clearly, I do not want to compromise the process in any way with the Judicial Manager and those involved in this matter. We will go very shortly to the Due diligence stage and then they will be required to

submit bids. So that is where we are we are making progress and I am very grateful for the question in that regard.

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

3. *The Honourable Arnhim Eustace, Leader of the Opposition asked the Honourable Minister of Rural Transformation, Forestry, Agriculture and Fisheries:-*

Can the Honourable Minister please indicate the precise action to be taken by the Ministry of Agriculture for the next nine months with respect to spraying for Black Sigatoka and other diseases affecting the banana and plantain crops?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL: Mr. Speaker, in relation to the question that is before this Honourable House let me say that the Ministry of Agriculture will continue to work with the consultative committee on bananas, especially for a plan of action for black Sigatoka and other diseases affecting banana and plating crops.

Mr. Speaker, as I speak the aircraft is in the year doing another cycle that cycle would be completed in another week or so, and so one final cycle for the year will be done. It will somewhere around the 26th December, and will go into the New Year, 2012, this cycle will be the final cycle for the year. However, Mr. Speaker, already \$3.1 million have already been identified in the 2012 Budget where six cycles of spraying operations would be done. The chemicals identified will be Bankit, Tilt and Volley and of course these chemicals would be used with spraytex and so Mr. Speaker, an application is already before the Tenders Board for approval to purchase we do not want to wait until we get directly into 2012 before we place this application before the Tenders Board, so the application is already there and we want to make sure we have the approval before the end of the year.

This application also carries the Pilot's contract, of course, the Pilot has an annual contract and we are making sure that all of this is done before the end of the year. Equally, Mr. Speaker, at the moment, presently there are two teams that operate as ground crew and these steams really they spray in the hot spot areas and so we want to beef up that part of the operation by ensuring that we have another team to really have a better control. And so, for 2012, Mr. Speaker, we will be having three ground crews that will be operating – three teams will be doing the work of ground crew spraying.

Also, Mr. Speaker, extension officers will continue to do more field supervision, we are ensuring that that is so because we want to ensure that the cultural practices at the field level is being maintained. Of course, we want to ensure that there is systematic rib and tagging [inaudible] with bananas, weed control, good nutrition record keeping and certification. All these are required to ensure that the good cultural practices are maintained. Equally, Mr. Speaker, those farmers who identified with poor codes, these farmers will now be checked on shipment days, so that corrective action can be taken at the farm level.

Besides Black Sigatoka and yellow Sigatoka Mr. Speaker, Moko disease is also one of the diseases of economic importance to the industry and so the Moko control programme will continue to ensure that we continue to do the eradication of that disease. Interestingly, Mr. Speaker, we have identified and planted varieties that are resistant to both Moko and black Sigatoka disease and so that in itself too is also a measure we are looking at. And we are hoping that all of this will be a part of the control in terms of those diseases. I am much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary Question.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Mr. Speaker, I framed my original question within the framework of nine months and the six spraying identified for 2012 is it for the year or the first six months for the year?

HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL: Mr. Speaker, the six cycles is for 2012 and that is for the whole year: twelve months of 2012.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question No. 4, I am wondering Honourable Member in light of the answer provided; in question 4 (a) whether you would like to proceed with that question still?

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Mr. Speaker, there is a part to question (a) which the Honourable Minister may have additional information on. I understand and I appreciate his answer regarding the treatment of Black Sigatoka.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: So, I will ask the question anyway and if he says well that is the answer well then I will accept that.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: But then there is a second part, part (c) to the question.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I did not mention (b) and (c) just (a) I was talking about.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Thank you.

4. *Dr. the Honourable Godwin Friday, Representative of the Northern Grenadines asked the Honourable Minister of rural Transformation, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries:-*

Considering the disastrous situation in the Banana Industry resulting from your Ministry's failure to spray banana in a timely manner against the Black Sigatoka disease and given that a large quantity of our bananas have been rejected in the UK because of poor quality resulting from the effects of the Black Sigatoka disease, will the Honourable Minister please state:-

- a. *What have you done or intend to do to try to assure the farmers of this country that you and the Ministry of Agriculture will do what is required to combat the Black Sigatoka disease and improve the quality of the country's bananas.;*

- b. *have you considered resigning as Minister of Agriculture so that someone else may provide leadership in the industry and a fresh start for the farmers; and*
- c. *if not why?*

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the information given in the preamble of this question in my mind is not only erroneous but indeed misleading and stuffed with political mischief. Mr. Speaker, at the last parliament, I gave full information to the cause of the reduced operations.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: I rise on a point of order.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Just a minute, what point of order you rose on at this time?

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Mr. Speaker, when I asked this question, I asked it with the best intention, you vetted these questions to this Honourable House, I do not think the Honourable Minister should be imputing improper motives to me when I ask a question on an important issue. The question is not stuffed with political mischief it is asking you what you are doing about the bananas.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: To be honest with you I would not rule that as being stuffed with improper motive, I mean he sees a political complex in the question and he stated that. You are a politician as well and imputing improper motive I cannot see him doing that. I cannot rule in that favour; I am sorry. Honourable Member [interjection] no, maybe he wants to deal with the political part of it as well, answer the question. I am sure the Honourable Member of Central Kingstown understands the complications there.

HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL: Mr. Speaker, if I could continue, last parliament I gave full information for the cause of the reduced operations for the spraying of the Black Sigatoka problem that really would have caused the flare up of the disease of which really added to or caused an increase in the quality of bananas delivered. But to say that bananas are rejected in the UK was solely because of Black Sigatoka disease as was identified in the question is not true. And the Member must get his information right before pronouncing these statements.

Mr. Speaker, the data has shown and I am not surprised you know, Mr. Speaker, because the Honourable Member for Northern Grenadines I am not sure if he is accustomed to banana production and what goes on with banana production. So, I know his predecessor would have indicated in 1998 at a fisherman's day rally in Kingstown "That when we have fish in the Grenadines *alyuh gon* want bananas up *dey*". Now, therefore that indicates to me what the sentiment is and so Mr. Speaker, in relation to the question, the data shows that in terms of the quality of our bananas on average St Vincent would have been having a 66% PUWS that is (percentage unit within specification).

Now, Mr. Speaker, the average over the period we have been exporting our bananas and the quality shows, over grade: 16%, now fields that do come down with Black Sigatoka is where the leaves would be affected and so the fruit would take longer to be matured. When you have over grade fruits, Mr. Speaker, is when the plant is

healthy and therefore the plant will be able to produce that fruit, and when you harvest it, it is above the grade that is required for export. So, 16% of our bananas have been over grade on average and this is higher than ripe and turning which is at 13%. Now, ripe and turning, Mr. Speaker, can be attributed to the Leaf Spot disease because the fruit will be old but it will not reach to the stage of over grade. And so to say that Black Sigatoka is the total cause, Mr. Speaker, is not so.

Equally, Mr. Speaker, the data shows crown rot at 8% almost of that as ripe and turning. Crown rot as one of the unit specifications is not acceptable at all as a saleable fruit, therefore, Mr. Speaker, this adds tremendously with the quality that is exported. Scruffy fruit is 2%, latex stain 2%, scars 3%. All of these added to the quality problems that exist so that ripe and turning which is associated to the Black Sigatoka problem is not the only cause. As a matter of fact if our percentage within specification is 66% it means therefore that 44% of our bananas are out of specification and of that 44% [interjection] 34% and of that 34% 13% is the causative agent for ripe and turning. And so, we see therefore that approximately 33% of the fruits that are bad are of what can be attributed to Leaf Spot problems.

Now, Mr. Speaker that is why I am saying that the information in the preamble of this question is wrong and that Black Sigatoka is not the only contributing factor to the quality of the problems that exist with our export of bananas.

HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Read the question again.

HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL: Mr. Speaker, what have we done in the Ministry? Mr. Speaker, when the problem was identified and I mentioned it we in the Ministry we cut back 18% of the trees that were affected in the fields of our bananas that is all those plants that had a bunch that had less than six leaves. We went in and at the end of September we would have removed 18% of the fruits in the field. The Government stepped in and Mr. Speaker, \$2.5 million dollars were given as an assistance programme to our farmers they got both in cash as well as fertilizer to assist in this regard. Mr. Speaker, the farmers were very happy with the assistance they were given to the extent Mr. Speaker, that the CEO of WINFARM, Mr. Keizer, Mr. Henry Keizer I saw a copy of a letter that he would have written to the Prime Minister indicating to the Prime Minister and thanking the Prime Minister of the support he would have given to the banana farmers of this country and that no other government would have come and given such a support to the banana farmers of this country. [Applause]

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: [Inaudible – mike not in use] no! I [inaudible] say that

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please, please [Striking gavel]

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: [Inaudible – mike not in use]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member please, please Honourable Member [Striking gavel]

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: [Inaudible – mike not in use]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Listen, you were speaking awhile ago on a matter on which I supported you, please show that protocol in the Honourable House yourself; please show that kind of protocol in the Honourable House [Striking gavel]

HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL: Mr. Speaker, I do not have the copy of the letter here but of course, I could make it available to the parliament. Mr. Keizer commented and thanked the Prime Minister for the assistance given to our farmers particularly at this time of the year and that no other government has given that kind of support to the banana farmers of this country. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I know and I have heard some comments on the radio stations chastising Mr. Keizer on making this very comment, so I am not surprised, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Would you just continue the answer to the question.

HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL: In relation to?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: The question that ...

HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL: Mr. Speaker, in relation to the (b) part of the question I have to ask myself, is the Member who is asking this question, the Member of the Northern Grenadines is he sound in his mind? Is he natural? Is he a normal person? Mr. Speaker, the constituency of North Windward would have elected me here in 2001 on a ULP's ticket, I was reelected by the constituency in 2005 by almost 400 votes, I was reelected again 2010 with over 100 votes added to what I got [Applause] As a matter of fact Mr. Speaker, the only politician sitting in this House with that kind of record is the Honourable Prime Minister who every time you go to the polls consistently you have been having that incremental increase [Applause] [Interjections]

Mr. Speaker, since Adult Suffrage 50 years ago, Mr. Speaker, it is under the watch of the Representative of North Windward since 2001 that you would have seen a bridge built at Rabacca. It took fifty years, fifty years after Adult Suffrage for that to happen. As a matter of fact Mr. Speaker, a gentleman indicated to me that it took 2000 years for a bridge to be built across the river, I am saying it is since Adult Suffrage but others are indicating that it is over 2000 years. Mr. Speaker, I have done that and my constituency they are proud of me for that. [Knocking on desk]

Mr. Speaker, since Adult Suffrage over 50 years ago the constituency have now seen secondary education that has been done under my watch, I am the representative for the constituency.

HONOURABLE CLAYTON BURGIN: And they are asking you about resigning, and they are asking you about resigning.

HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL: Since Adult Suffrage, Mr. Speaker, I have built...

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Just a minute, just a minute. What are you rising for? [Interjections] Just minute, please sit I want to deal with this; let me just deal with this.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the Honourable Minister he is misinterpreting the question and I am fortified in that because the Honourable Clayton Burgin said something which indicated that the question was misinterpreted. I am not asking him to resign as the parliamentary representative from North Windward that is between him and the electors in North Windward.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I am talking here of his portfolio as a Minister of Agriculture. He would not have built a school or built a bridge as the Minister of Agriculture and his answer so far Mr. Speaker is talking about his election.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: [Striking the gavel] Honourable Member [Laughs]

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Mr. Speaker, I am on my feet.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, just give him a chance; [Interjections] but wait should we really prolong this thing, he has explained his reason the Minister you are saying categorically that you will not resign and you were giving reasons as...

HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL: I am answering the question.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Disqualify it; he said he wants as Agriculture Minister not as...

HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL: Well, I am coming to that.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay, Oh, you are coming to it.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Mr. Speaker, if I might say, you know, it is not a trivial matter because there are farmers out there who have to decide whether to risk further financial investment in their bananas and if they feel that they do not have proper leadership, they may not wish to do so.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay. [Interjection] He has given the reason [Striking the gavel] He is going on to the reason why he will not resign as ... you are asking if he not is resigning, why not and he is giving you the reasons why he will not resign as Agriculture Minister. Honourable Member, give him the reason why you are not resigning.

HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL: Mr. Speaker am I to be asked the question by the Honourable Member for Northern Grenadines, and for him to answer the question himself? [Laughter] [Interjections] I really [Laughter] a mean you are asking the question and then you want to answer it yourself? [Interjections]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: No! No! Just a minute I do not know if he is answering it. [Interjections]

HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL: Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons I will not resign is because of the fact that I have been able with a star team to be able to reduce poverty in this country whereby we have moved from 27% to 3% of indigent poor, should I resign for that? Mr. Speaker, there is no two ways about it over the years the Banana Industry would have been facing some difficulties but it is this government, Mr. Speaker, in 2003 established a unit in the Ministry of Agriculture to handle diversification matters.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for West Kingstown, would you please allow the Member to give his answer.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Of course.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Right, thank you very much.

HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL: Mr. Speaker, presently in the Ministry of Agriculture under the BNTF programme we are now refurbishing the Bequia Hospital, and we are rebuilding the Bequia Clinic, Mr. Speaker, that is a programme from the Ministry of Agriculture where I am assisting the Honourable Member in his constituency [Applause] and you want me to resign? [Interjections] [Striking the gavel] Mr. Speaker, I have seen questions for this parliament today in relation to sporting facilities, in relation to yachting, I have not seen or heard of the representative for the last ten, eleven years making any contribution on these matters that he consistently comes to this parliament asking questions [interjections] [Striking of gavel]

Mr. Speaker, it appears to me that the Honourable Member is not even part and parcel of the development of the constituency of which he represents. Mr. Speaker, I am told that all the representative would do is to walk the streets of Kingstown and Bequia.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member just deal with the question let us not go off on those kinds of...

HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL: Mr. Speaker, the question is I have a legacy in my constituency and in the Ministry of Agriculture what is the legacy for the last ten, eleven years of the representative of his constituency? I have a proud legacy Mr. Speaker, and because of that it is only the Prime Minister who would have seen my performance from 2001-2005 when I was made a Junior Minister and the result of 2005, he made it abundantly clear to the public that Montgomery Daniel you have done well at the polls and I am promoting you to full Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture. [Applause] and when I returned in 2010 the Prime minister said, "I am making you a Senior Minister", what does that say? There is confidence in the Representative of North Windward. I am much obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Question No. 5, Honourable Member for Northern Grenadines.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Mr. Speaker, you do not want me to ask a Supplementary? [Interjection] I suppose if I did I will still get an answer with no relevance whatsoever to the question, so I would move on, Mr. Speaker.

5. *Dr. the Honourable Godwin Friday, Representative of Northern Grenadines asked the Honourable Minister of Tourism and Industry:-*

In light of the importance of yachting to our country's tourism industry and given that over the years the problem of illegal yacht break-ins or burglaries in Admiralty Bay and elsewhere in the country has been brought repeatedly to the attention of your Ministry and in light of the unfulfilled promises made by the police and the government to provide security for yachts in our harbours and bays by way of boat patrol, will the Honourable Minister please state:

a. why no regular water patrol was instituted in Admiralty Bay and;

- b. what is being done now to address effectively the problem of illegal yacht break-ins in Admiralty Bay and to reassure members of the yachting community that the government is taking their security and welfare seriously.*

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Minister with responsibility for Tourism and Industry.

HONOURABLE SABOTO CAESAR: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when a comparative analysis is done on yachting in St Vincent and the Grenadines and we compare the months January-September of 2010 with January-September of 2011, yachting is up by 7.4% in 2011 [Applause]. That is a fact, so it is not only that yachting is important but we are seeing growth in this sector. Mr. Speaker, our two main productive sectors are agriculture and tourism and these sectors would have come under attack by acts of criminality for decades, agriculture, praedial larceny and tourism the theft against yachtees in the main. This government would have brought special legislation to this parliament to address the issue of praedial larceny.

I now turn to what has been done to address the issue of theft against yachtees in recent times in Bequia. Mr. Speaker, on Friday, the 4th November, 2011 a stakeholders meeting was held at the Bequia Anglican School, the issue of regular patrols was raised and I have been advised by the Commissioner of Police that there are now nightly patrols being conducted by the Coast Guard for the past week. These patrols are expected to continue. Further, approval has been given by Cabinet for the use of three vessels that would have been confiscated to be put in the fight against crime. All of these vessels are currently being refurbished and a vessel will be deployed within the next two weeks to be based in the harbour and will traverse the immediate environs.

In addition, two yacht operators, yesterday I spoke to them and they have pledged to donate a vessel to be stationed in Port Elizabeth, to be used by the Coast Guard for patrols in and around the harbor. To complement, Mr. Speaker, the on water policing, more police officers have been deployed on land and there has been certain strategic changes in police personnel since the meeting. A regular stop and search system is in place, Mr. Speaker, and around the harbor the police presence has been increased. Also work is currently being done to foster the establishment of an effective water taxi association and a special committee has been formed and this committee was selected from a cross section of over 200 persons who attended that meeting that Friday night and the Honourable Member for the Northern Grenadines he also attended the meeting. Mr. Speaker, please permit me to list the names of the persons who are part of this committee:-

- George Whitney
- Michael Connell
- Andy Mitchell
- Cordel Tannis
- Mc Carthy Lewis
- George Scott
- Fitz Snagg

The Committee has had its first meeting and I attended the first meeting of the Committee and a proposal has been made to conduct a study of the feasibility of placing cameras in certain security vulnerable areas in Bequia. Mr. Speaker, I was in Toronto delivering an address to a Vincentian Diaspora group and when I got back to my room I decided to do some work and I tuned into We Fm, there were four callers from Bequia who called in and they spoke at length about the issue of the breakings and how it is affecting the yachting sector, I also called into the programme, that was the Wednesday, and I noted that there will be an emergency meeting on Friday. I actually had to cut my visit, a similar incident occurred when I was in London earlier this year

when there was a spate of robberies in Union Island; and the Honourable Member for the Southern Grenadines can attest to that fact.

Mr. Speaker, I take my job very seriously because I know that tourism has the potential to be the transformative sector in St Vincent and the Grenadines and I want to send a very stern message from this side of the House to persons who think that they can continue to engage in illicit activities that would have a damning and negative impact on tourism, that Saboto Caesar, I will not sit idly by and allow anyone to destroy this very important sector. Mr. Speaker, I am obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question No. 6 Honourable Member for the Northern Grenadines.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Honourable Minister.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary Question Honourable Member.

Supplementary Question

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Because, you know, we have heard a lot of talk about plans and programmes for interdiction and so on, I recall that when the previous Minister Beache was in office he had spoken about an interdiction plan to deal with the security of the water and breakings and so on. Is this part of that plan or is this something new that the Ministry is coming up with?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Minister of Tourism.

HONOURABLE SABOTO CAESAR: Firstly, Mr. Speaker, I must state that we have gone past a stage of planning what I spoke about a while ago was actual implementation. To answer the question directly that we have incorporated the plans and strategies of the former discussions that were held with Minister Beache when he was Minister; but we are long gone past planning. In fact, the boat is on its way, the personnel that was raised in the meeting, you know the personnel I would not mention the persons names in public but there has been a change already. In fact, the very next day there was a change; currently persons call me from Bequia on a daily basis and they are speaking about the improved circumstances where persons are stopped and they are being searched. Because one of the main problems that we were facing is that persons were going into Bequia using the boat, the Admiral or the Express, they go on the last boat down and they leave very early on the first boat up. So, those items which they would have stolen would come up on the first boat. And that is one of the main reasons why we would have implemented the regular stop and search. So, all of that is going on and I am certain that the member for the Northern Grenadines can attest to these things that he continues to see unfolding. There are certain things though, Mr. Speaker, that I am privy to but because of their technical nature, in terms of they are matters of security, I will not be able to say in public. But I just want to note that there are many things which are happening in a very covert manner. I am obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question No. 6, Honourable Member Northern Grenadines.

6. *Dr. the Honourable Godwin Friday, Representative of the Northern Grenadines asked the Honourable Minister of National Mobilisation, Social Development, the Family, Persons with Disabilities, Youth, sports and Culture:-*

Recognising the importance of sports facilities to the health and wellness of the people of any community and acknowledging that the community of Paget Farm might benefit from the improvement of the playing field and the hard court at Paget Farm, which have deteriorated badly over the years;

- a. will the Honourable Minister please state what, if anything will be done to repair that facility;*
- b. will he also say whether efforts will be made to improve the surface of the playing field in the park so that the field can be used safely and more effectively for playing sports such as football, rounders and cricket and;*
- c. will he further indicate whether he will assist members of the community and organisations such as the Bequia Cricket Association, in the establishment of a cricket ground, including a new cricket pitch in the park to serve the community.*

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Minister of National Mobilisation.

HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON: Much obliged. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I am happy that the Honourable Member for the Northern Grenadines asking questions about sporting facilities, I have along answer here for him this morning. The National Sports Council has both the mandate and the responsibilities for sports facilities in the state, and they administer restorative and other related programmes based on a number of priorities including their physical condition, the hosting of tournaments, magnitude and usage of available funding. The Council has been working along with the Directorate of Grenadines Affairs and with Mr. Herman Belmar in particular as well as the management committee for sports facilities in Bequia with a view to implementing phased restoration of the Paget Farm playing field.

The scope of the work will include re-grading of the entire surface which is pox marked with pumice like rocks with jot out from beneath and which had been left in that state since the former NDP administration commissioned the facility in the 1990's efforts to have this corrected by the NDP Administration proved futile. Mr. Speaker, I do not know if a lot of persons who are present here and who are listening know where the Paget Farm playing field is located. It is located just about the entrance to the airport, I know as a fact that the playing field is used; the hard court facility is used for carnival activities as well.

In order to correct the situation, Mr. Speaker, hundred of tons of topsoil will be required to top dressing and covering the protruding rocks even though drilling is also used to help fragment the rocks beneath. Mr. Herman Belmar is assisting the Council by helping to identify a large enough source of topsoil in Bequia which could be realised when a major construction project is implemented. Needless to say that this would prove a very costly venture to top dress and then re-grade the surface, however, such a source of topsoil has not been identified as yet.

Funding is currently not available for the implementation of remedial works at the Paget Farm hard court; however, the Clive Tannis hard court and playing field at Port Elizabeth will continue to provide adequate and

alternative use for the sportsmen and sports women on Bequia and to the people of Bequia. I believe that (a) and (b) are answered in that part. “Will he further indicate whether he will assist Members in the community”? The National Sports Council on behalf of the Ministry of National Mobilisation and the Department of Sports is actively involved in assisting the Bequia Cricket Association with a wicket preparation at the Clive Tannis Playing Field. The Council has habitually sent teams of groundsmen over the year to assist in this exercise and one of the only three motorized wicket rollers owned by the Council has been deployed there over recent years, and I think the Honourable Member knows that as a fact.

The Council will continue these exercises whenever a new pitch is to be implemented at Paget Farm but realistically the topsoil must first source for such endeavour if what the Honourable Parliamentary Representative is for a new cricket pitch on a fully restored playing field. However if the request is for a new pitch before the facility is restored then the Council would actively explore that possibility. Well, I do not know.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Well, that would be very helpful.

HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON: Such works must be seen in the context of National Sports Council has to upkeep all sixty two hard courts and fifty six playing fields, throughout the state and the greatest priority would be where the demand is greater and where the population is highest. Moreover, Mr. Speaker, given the current world economic meltdown the Council has to down scale its operations and operate on the basis of greatest priority with respect to repairing and upgrading sporting facilities. The National Sports Council is currently hosting a three-match international series between Bangladesh here and the West Indies and in mid March great emphasis will have to be placed on hosting three back to back one day internationals between the West Indies and the heralded Australians.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: April.

HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON: In April, sorry, these currently, the greatest priority areas of the Council, surely the Council cannot alleviate the Paget Farm Sports Facility above these at this present time. Much obliged, Mr. Speaker. [Applause]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question No.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Clarification, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Clarification.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: I just wanted to be sure when the Honourable Minister asked whether fixing the cricket pitch at Paget Farm would be a satisfactory start and I said “yes”, if that is a commitment that it will be done?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Minister, National Mobilisation.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: It does not take much, Mr. Speaker, but it would be very, very helpful.

HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON: But you know Honourable Member that I know the facility as well [Interjection] yes, but even if you put in the strip there and the outfield, I know the outfield is very bad. [Interjection] We will think about it, and we will consider it very favourably. [Laughs]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question No. 7, Honourable Member for the Southern Grenadines. You need the podium?

7. *The Honourable Terrance Ollivierre Representative of the Southern Grenadines asked the Honourable Minister of Education:*

Students from Canouan are faced with serious financial and social problems in a quest to access quality secondary education on mainland St Vincent, Bequia and Union Island. In light of the call by residents to the introduction of secondary education on the island and the promise by the ULP in the 2010 Manifesto to build a secondary school on the island, will the Minister please state:-

- a. *What mechanisms have been put in place to ensure the successful introduction of secondary education in Canouan; and*
- b. *How soon can the residents and students start benefitting from secondary education on the island?*

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Minister of Education

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, during this current session on Tuesday 24th May, 2011 this question was already answered. I am obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: That was when again, May?

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: 24th May.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Yes, and that would have contravened Rule 20 (c)

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: (c) 1

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Yes, 20 (c) 1; okay, next question Honourable Member ...

8. *The Honourable Terrance Ollivierre, Representative of Southern Grenadines asked the Honourable Minister of Transport and Works:-*

The Big Sand area of Union Island has undergone serious erosion over the years and continues to be directly affected by sea action, thus hampering tourism development and threatening private homes. Can the Honourable Minister please indicate:-

- a. *Whether the problem has been investigated to ascertain the reason and possible solutions; and*

b. If any action will be taken soon to assist in the protection of the beach.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Minister of Transport and Works, Question No. 8.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, I think the Honourable Member left out “soon” in his question. “If any action will be taken to assist”, he said. But “soon” to assist; Mr. Speaker, what is happening to Big Sand in Union Island is happening to many of our beaches throughout the length and breadth of this nation starting from PSV in the south to Fancy in the north. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I recall as a young man in the San Souci, Mount Grennan area playing cricket below Miss Marks’s house below the beach in Mountain Grennan, right now there is a precipice from the road down to the sea. So, it is happening all over and Big Sand is a beautiful beach, my knowledge of Big Sand tells me 750 ft long of beautiful Pristine white sand. When I saw it for the first time I enquired because people were swimming there very comfortably but yet on the northern shore with the rollers coming in that were not reaching shore I found it a strange phenomenon and they explained to be that there is a reef off the beach that breaks the rollers, the waves and therefore you have gentler waves coming into the sea. I am surprised to hear now that it is being eroded to this extent.

I have not seen it in years but there has been absolutely no investigation taken and this is not a subject I think that we can address in the near future. It is a phenomenon that is taking place all over the world and this is a very costly exercise and I do not know if the fishermen around there who frequent the area can inform on the quality of the reef. I believe, maybe, if you were getting erosion inside it is because the reef is disintegrating out there either from poor care, because I cannot see it being natural water because of the way the tide flows in that area. You are getting north and north easterly coming in that area, bringing water from the ocean and there is not a lot of run off because just outside of Big Sand is the Salt Pond on the way to Big Sand that is a natural drain from the hill sides into that area. Mr. Speaker, I cannot make a commitment as to any work on this matter in the near future.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question No. 9 the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown.

9. *The Honourable St Clair Leacock, Representative of Central Kingstown asked the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Economic Development, National Security, Legal and Grenadines Affairs:*

In your 2010 Budget address as Minister of Finance you identified and had approved by the Parliament of St Vincent and the Grenadines substantial monies in the sum of \$40.6 million dollars for twenty-one specific Capital Projects. Almost all of these projects resurfaced in 2011 for Kingstown and its environs. Will the Minister please state what progress if any has been made on the following:

- a. *Upgrading the Administrative Centre \$1.0 million;*
St Vincent Boys’ Grammar School and St Vincent Girls’
High School Development projects - \$0.6;
E.T. Joshua Airport Rehabilitation - \$4.0;

renovation of the Old Montrose Police Station - \$0.6 million;
renovation of the Registry - \$0.4;
construction of Learning Resource Centres in West and Central Kingstown - \$2.0 million.
rehabilitation of the Murray's Road - \$2.0 million.
Kingstown clean-up campaign - \$1.5 million.
rehabilitation of the Fort Charlotte Bridge.
retrofitting of the Ministry of Urban Development - \$0.4

A total of just under \$13.0 million of the \$40 million approved.

- b. How much of the 2011 Capital Budget has been expended to date; and
- c. how much of the category Other Receipts of the Capital Receipts has been realised to date.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Central Kingstown.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I would answer the three parts of the question, Mr. Speaker, in particular when I answer the (a) part, I would like to address it within the context of Standing Order of the House of Assembly, 20 (g):-

“A question shall not be asked

[Pause] sorry (e):-

“No more than one subject be referred to in any one question, and a question shall not be made of excess length”.

And I will also answer the question; Mr. Speaker bearing in mind that on the 13th December, which is less than a month's time a lot of details would be presented in respect of all of these items and others when we present the Estimates and debate the Estimates. So, I will answer the question within the context of (a) the rules of the House and an event which is to take place in this House in less than one month's time.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to say generally that the projects mentioned are at varying stage of implementation some such as the administrative centre upgrade, the air conditioning they are near in completion. And others such as the Learning Resource Centres and the rehabilitation of the Murray's Road at the final design stage which construction is scheduled for 2012. Others for instance the Grammar School and the Girls' High School are at an even earlier stage in terms of design. And there are some works which have been done, so I shall endeavour to be short to say where we are with them.

Mr. Speaker, to make this point that the resources which we have at hand and in particularly in this case manpower resources, technical resources particularly in the Ministry of Works as regarding Engineers and Quantity Surveyors we have had and still do have significant bottlenecks. I just want to map the framework.

Take for instance this year, due to some pressures which have been put on us by agencies from which we are receiving substantial sums of money, the tenth TDF where the focal sector is on health with about \$34, \$35 million we have a lot of preparatory work that we have been doing that is rolling out in the beginning of 2012.

The US\$5 million programme from the World Bank post Tomas Funds also commences in the beginning of next year. The US\$12 million CDB loan, again post Tomas and post April floods they are also commencing in the New Year. And the work which is preliminary too a \$56.2 million project from the World Bank regarding climate resilience. The last one is 4½ years; the other three that I have mentioned is over a three-year period but we have had to do work, a great deal of technical work even in this year and some other technical work got left back, sidelined and indeed on many of the repairs BRAGSA has been engaged. So, I answered with all that as the context and the frame. And I will say this, the St Vincent Boys Grammar School and St Vincent the Girls' High School Development Projects the terms of reference are being prepared by the Ministry of Works for the Ministry of Education to engage the consultants to develop the master plan for the development of these schools.

Additionally, the Ministry of Transport and Works engaged a contractor to waterproof the roof of the two storied classroom block at the Grammar School. In respect of the renovation of the Montrose Police Station the Tender's Board rejected the idea of the waiver of the government of St Vincent and the Grenadines through the Ministry to enter into a contract with Francis Lowe of Trinidad who had provided quotations for the renovation of the roof and steel frame, because you are supposed to get three quotations and it was some while and they couldn't get more than one quotation and the Tender's Board quite rightly they said to the Ministry look, I know you want to hurry me and it has to get done but you have to fight to see if you can get two other tenders. And they are now being sought from two other steel fabricators: Structural Steel Systems in Barbados and TNS Welding Services in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Mr. Speaker, if I may just pause here to say this, you take for instance we have a number of buildings to construct, renovate and rehabilitate under the World Bank Funds, the \$5 million post Tomas but among the specifications you have to get a firm which has had, (and a number of people do not realise this) a turnover in the last 3 years of an average of \$1 million per year. Now, there are only a few companies that you have in the country; few contractors who are able to make that grade and they are not going to allow you to have the contract and then to go and sub-contract it. If the sub-contractor has worked with you and you are the contractor and I see the Honourable Leader of the Opposition nodded his head because he is familiar with a number of these things; so, that it is not only a development in a small island economy and society is not only constrained by the issue of resources of a material but resources not only in the public sector but also in the private sector. Clearly if this is a matter of absolute urgency I would go to the Cabinet and I would have the Cabinet overrule the Tender's Board but in a matter say for instance of the renovation of the old Montrose Police Station which is not an absolute emergency though it needs to be done, I would like to see three tenders too, so that the Tender's Board could choose the most competitive tender.

The renovation of the Registry in 2010 designs which catered specifically for the relocation of the Registry and construction estimates were done by Carvil Williams. He has since been paid for his designs and the revised designs and cost estimates completed by Ministry of Transport and Works et cetera in 2011 for the general office space only. I said this, Mr. Speaker, we had hoped that the Bank of St Vincent and the Grenadines and I give problem in sequencing that the Bank of St Vincent and the Grenadines would have moved into the Reigate

Building much earlier than it has just done because we intended to use the downstairs of the original National Commercial Building we wanted to use downstairs because it has a vault to house the Registry temporarily; so we had to move to go somewhere to do the kinds of renovations we have to do at the Registry and that delayed us. I am talking about practical matters. You may plan to do something but if your plan (a) is dependent on getting (a) done or (b) done it is dependent on (a) happening; and (a) did not happen because that is not within my own control.

The construction of the Learning Resources Centres in West and Central Kingstown, the tender documents are being prepared, construction of the West Kingstown LRC and that will be issued at the end of 2011, the tender documents. Mr. Speaker, the same persons who have to prepare these are the same persons who have to do another of other things that is why we decided to separate, take BRAGSA away to ease some work off the Chief Engineer and his own staff but there is so much work which is to be done and in the pipeline and to meet deadline with the funding agencies that those who have been involved in government or those who appreciate these things would understand them.

The tender document of North Leeward and Troumaca they are being prepared. For the rehabilitation of Murray's Road detailed drawings and cost estimates are being done and we are awaiting the funds from the Republic of China for this project. As regards the Kingstown clean-up campaign the objective of the project is to organize vending in Kingstown and the first area being tackled is at the Kingstown Market Bedford Street. Four consultations have been held with the vendors, and the Steering Committee has been established headed by Minister Francis, with representation from the vendors, the Ministry of Transport and Works officials and Town Board officials. Following the clean-up of Bedford Street on the Easter weekend, the vendors are now moving their table and benches to China Town on the weekends to have the Bedford Street area cleared. Vendors are also tasked with the responsibility of cleaning their individual vending areas. The prototype table is also being designed for vendors and the first prototype has been completed and I want to say additionally that there is a company an international company which operates in St Vincent and the Grenadines. I had requested of them because I knew they had done some rehabilitative work at Coronation Market in Jamaica which was once a prestigious institution and had deteriorated and I had asked them if they can work with us in a private-public partnership and that work is now at discussion within the context of the overall clean-up and the Cabinet has given the Minister of Transport and Works permission to proceed with some limited operation to do something which I am hoping he can start before the end of the year.

The rehabilitation of Fort Charlotte Bridge an initial assessment of the bridge was undertaken in 2010 by an historical restoration architect four ton weight restriction has since been imposed on the bridge, the drawbridge to arrest the deterioration prior to its restoration and the Ministry of Transport and Works they are doing the design in conjunction with the restoration and architect with respect of this matter.

Retrofitting of the Ministry of Urban Development - the project is being subsumed under the Treasury Building Rehabilitation Project; which is seeking to develop the Treasury Building as well as the Government Printery and the old administrator's office block for the government buildings. Mr. Speaker, one of the things which we have to do immediately over the Treasury section is that the Director of Audit is really cramped for space and I promised her until the complete rehabilitation we are going to make available where the old National Commercial Building used to be to assist them because we have to do things. I am telling you all these matters which we see we put inside of the Estimates I make sure because I have the follow-up meetings on an ongoing

basis to see what we are doing to keep things going in the challenging times not only with financial resources but also with the question of manpower resources. One of the things is that in the public sector we may have too many of some persons and not enough of others.

In relation to (b) Mr. Speaker, I want to reference the answer here in relation to what is the budgeted figure up to the end of October because you may see a number in the Estimates for a whole year but that would not be the number up to the end of October. So, for instances by the end of October we had planned to spend just over \$100 million on the Capital Budget but we have spent \$40.5 million. In fact, we have spent more than that but not all of it has yet been journalized.

In relation to the category Other Receipts of the Capital Receipts being realised to date well, as I had outlined, Capital Revenue and Grants \$39.4 million compared with \$11.3 for last year, and the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown is quite correct that I provided some details in answer to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition but provide even a little more. In respect to Capital Grants the figure is \$28.2 million. We had anticipated to have \$33.6 by this time; and in relation to the other we had anticipated to have \$24 million by the end of October, but we have \$9.9 and I indicated earlier in my answer for instance that the RCF monies the rapid facility monies which should be under that heading, they are not yet journalized.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if I may just say one other thing generally speaking, I know that there has been a lot of discussion on what IMF report is saying so far as I mentioned the RCF. We have had two RCF's facilities (Rapid Credit Facilities) which is basically zero interest for all practical purposes. For every time we go for a RCF which is not part of any adjustment programme, this is special facility in post disasters a report has to be sent to the Executive Board of the IMF and then when the Article 4 Consultation is done the Article 4 Consultation has to be sent to the Executive Board. I have given permission as I have always done for these reports: (1) on grounding the RCF or in the case of the Annual Article 4 Consultation for the reports to be published and in respect to the Staff Report for 2011. The Article 4 Consultation has just finished on the 16th, sorry the Executive Board on that Article 4 Consultation Report just finished on the 16th November, and I had given the permission that once the Executive Board Meeting is finished to have the Staff Reports published and indeed the RCF Reports.

I spoke myself to the head of Mission for the Article 4 and told her that and Mr. ... that is an annual thing; and Mr. Edwards the Director General of Finance and Planning has my instructions and he will say to them proceed, publish but the policy is there when all this talk about, I do not want to publish, I mean it is just [Interjection] But that is how it has always been.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: You are losing sight of the original question.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: No, I am not losing the original question. I mentioned the RCF and was just explaining the report in that regard because I did not have an opportunity earlier to speak on it. [Interjection] But that is all I have done. But I have answered you on each specific matter (a), (b) and (c) not only in respect...

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: I do not want [inaudible] let me give you the Supplementary [inaudible] [Interjections]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I am interested, Mr. Speaker, in just the simple truth.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: The truth is? I wonder if I should allow a supplementary in light of [laughs] 20 (e), if I should allow a supplementary. And I am going to be dealing really strongly with these things because what is happening, we have a lot more questions coming to the House because of a lot more Members and they are taking up an excessive length of time.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: No, you can say that, Mr. Speaker; Mr. Speaker, you cannot say that.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Yes.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: In all respect.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Just a minute, do not tell me I cannot say that.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: I am telling you, let us work together with this.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I am saying, wait hold a second, I am saying that some of these questions could be condensed; can't they be?

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: You want to see the Hansard?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I am talking about futuristically.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: You want to see Prime Minister Gonsalves's reply as opposition member.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I am saying futuristically.

HONOURABLE MR. LEACOCK: Futuristically. [Laughs] In his better days the Honourable Prime Minister had a question in 19 parts but let me give him the supplementary, Mr. Speaker, [Interjections] 19. Mr. Speaker in all seriousness I am grateful...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: The Speaker, then was not very [inaudible]

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Well, that is true, that is true. But I am grateful to the Prime Minister details to the question; it is useful and helpful because it speaks to the challenges in government, I know it is one thing to be in opposition and it is another thing to be in government; there are technical problems and there are capacity problems that is what I understand but the Prime Minister himself, Mr. Speaker and this is the supplementary. The Prime Minister himself had reservation about providing information now in view of December 13th exercise and that is precisely why I am asking my question because it is to my benefit to have this information to inform my preparation.

Supplementary Question

Now, what I really want to ask the Prime Minister is to what extent is he concerned that having got approval for estimates and budgets by the time we get to a new budget we are in fact restating information of three and four

years so it is not really an incremental budget, we are really going to be in 2012 perhaps where we should be in 2010, and people get the impression every year that these are incremental addition to our budget. But we still find ourselves three and four years after the fact speaking.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: [Inaudible]

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: [Laughs] I will sit down.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, may I just in dealing with the preamble that is to say “better days”. My better days are now and ahead of me; I want to say that and then in the same vein, Mr. Speaker, I was contemplating whether I should have provided congratulations or obituaries in relation to certain matters that arose out of the NDP Convention [Laughter] because I noticed that three Honourable Members who went for offices were all defeated. So, I do not know whether I should have offered congratulations for their effort or obituaries for their condition. In the same spirit in which you talk in your preamble I take the liberty of editorializing in that regard, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members. [Interjection] What is that? How many votes you got? Oh you got 119 votes and the Honourable Senator Baptiste got 19, you wish to rub her nose in the dirt? That is unkind of you. [Interjection] that is unkind of you.

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

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: You know that is unkind of you.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Proceed please.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, in as much as it is there, I wouldn't, Mr. Speaker, congratulate the Minority Chairman because he got less votes than both the other competitors together but in as much as he got more than certainly Senator Baptiste, I am sure that this would prompt the hands of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition to bring him here, which is his wish his desire for many, many years to come to this Honourable House. I do not know who you would remove I am just in the light, Mr. Speaker, of [Interjection] yea! Yea! [Laughter]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Agree, agree with that.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, I agree not, but I was taking liberties in the light of the liberties which you had permitted my Honourable Friend to say that my better days were behind me and I wanted to assure him that they were now with me and very much ahead of me.

Mr. Speaker, factually, the performance of this government in respect of the extent of the of implementation on the Capital Budget has been much better than under the New Democratic Party, much better and the analysis is there I have provided it every year. And that I am concerned that there are some items which were down for implementation and would go over to 2012? Of course, I am

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: It takes three to two years.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: No! No! Some of them take a little longer but some of them are done with swiftness even in a much shorter period than a twelve months cycle and you appreciate that. I am obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Central Kingstown.

10. *The Honourable St Clair Leacock, Representative of Central Kingstown asked the Honourable Minister of Transport and Works:-*

As we express thanks for small mercies for the repairs to our roads is the Honourable Minister in a position to indicate;

- a. the first quarter schedule for 2012 for further road repairs in Central Kingstown;*
- b. specifically can any consideration be given to the Bow Wood area on the road leading to Mr. Vanloo and Dr. Audian and other residents;*
- c. is the time opportune to remind you of the restoration of the Fenton/Belair link road; and*
- d. the Munroe Junction in Sharps was repaired through the voluntary effort of residents, will the Honourable Minister seize the initiative to replace this with asphalt mix of an acceptable standard to him.*

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Minister of Transport and Works question No. 10.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, small mercies really do stretch long, because obviously, the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown cannot really identify at this point and time a specific piece of road that needs to be fixed in his constituency because so many have been fixed; and I thank you for the congratulation of the two major pieces that have been done in your constituency. So, you cannot really find a bad piece now so that you can ask, because you would have asked for it. You are looking here for an upgrade [Interjection] yes that is what I am saying that is an upgrade that is not a fixing, that is coming from dirt to concrete.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot speak now for the matter of 2012, and again I say that Honourable Member here in November is asking me which roads I am going to fix in the first quarter of 2012 that means he has run out of roads to ask for, that is the point I was making. [Laughter] The list for the first quarter in 2012 will be done from a priority list which is already in BRAGSA hand that list as Brian George explained what we are doing now; the \$5 million is part of \$25 million/\$30 million repair programme that we have but you can only repair it as the funds come available. So, I would not be able to tell you now at this point what will be fixed in 2012.

Right now, we are carrying out about sixty four, sixty five contracts of the quality that you have seen in by Punty's house going up to Punty, and I am sure that you have driven through the Plan in Lowman's and the Honourable Parliamentary Representative of West Kingstown can so attest that the roads immediately surrounding the round about going down to Senator

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: [Inaudible]

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: I know, I know. I remember Mr. Speaker, when we started repairing the schools; some of the schools we fixed one got fans and when the Prime Minister visited and the Prime

Minister asked, “How are things?” They said, “Well Prime Minister thank you for the fans but we can do with some air-conditioned units now”. So, people’s appetites always increase as things are done for them.

The road in Bow Wood Mr. Speaker, leading to Vanloo residence, this road was not really identified for road repairs in the near future.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: It was?

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Not identified. BRAGSA undertook some minimal work on the lower section by grading and stablising the road it would be reassessed and prioritized relative to other projects in the constituency; so I am not going to give a commitment on it now. The Fenton/Belair link road is a major Capital project. What I indicated to this parliament is that two bridges under one of the programmes that we have for disaster would be rebuilt; but we in the Ministry, we are preparing t do some estimates on a complete rebuilding of the link road from Fenton to Belair. I will say to you it is not in the Capital Estimates for next year.

The matter at Munroe junction, I am advised by BRAGSA that the repairs that were done was considered a good fix by BRAGSA but the repairs were confined to concrete road not asphalt. So, I am advising not to put concrete on asphalt, do not patch asphalt with concrete but you can patch concrete with concrete. Right, so the asphalt area, BRAGSA proposes to do some repairs under this current \$5 million area, to the asphalt area of it but we will not be putting asphalt over the fixed area of the concrete.

Mr. Speaker, I want to state categorically as the question tends to insinuate about acceptable standard of asphalt, I am very happy right now with the quality of asphalt being provided by both providers: Franco Construction Company and Argyle Construction Company. The quality is to BRAGSA satisfaction and to my satisfaction so all that is being used now is acceptable by me. Thank you very much.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question No. 11

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Mr. Speaker, I am not going to raise with him whether he has usurped the role of Mr. Ledger ‘Road’ it is? [Laughs]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: [Laughs]

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: At the Standard Bureau; but if he says so is so. [Laughs]

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: You have a supplementary [inaudible]

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: No, Julian Francis if you say the asphalt is good [laughs] the asphalt is good what would I question you for. [Interjections] No, I do not know anything about that; anything that happens outside I do not know about that [Interjections]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: He is doing so much work now you only know about one.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: No, I do not know anything about that; not about hot mix, I do not know anything about that [Laughs] hot or cold.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: You have got to rely on him.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: [Laughs] Yes, I have to rely on him.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Yea! Yea!

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Eleven in my name Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Eleven.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Of the Honourable gentleman, Transport and Works.

11. *Major the Honourable St Clair Leacock, Representative of Central Kingstown asked the Honourable Minister of Transport and Works:-*

Between the villages of Lodge Village and Dascent Cottage there is a river commonly referred to as "Dam Wall". An earlier attempt to construct a bridge there was abandoned for reasons not yet explained. This river crossing is still very important to the neighbouring villages. However, when the river flows heavily there is a major inconvenience, disruption and possible danger to young children.

- a. is there any plan to revisit this project;*
- b. does the government still intend to construct a bridge to link the villages of Lodge Village, Dascent Cottage with largo Heights; and*
- c. if in the affirmative when.*

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Minister of Transport and Works.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, a similar question was asked of the Honourable Prime Minister not too long ago and the answer was given in the Hansard that was given then, I believe three parliamentary sittings ago. The area, Mr. Speaker, I believe that this is an area where more pedestrians than vehicle, it is a site that both of them are difficult areas to construct bridges. I understand the need in the community, there was a bridge built up there some years ago, I have asked questions about that bridge and I have not had the answer yet from within the Ministry that existed then, the records cannot be found, as to how that bridge was built and how two gates on opposite sides block off that bridge.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: That is the question I am asking here.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: I am still looking for the answer and when I get the answer, I will give you, [Interjection] but I am saying that we are carrying out studies in both these areas and we will advance those studies further in 2012.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: “Does the government still intend to construct the bridge”, he wants to know?

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: I do not know if you quite answer the (b) I accept your answer on the Dam Wall situation.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Well, there is a plan to visit. Does the government still plan to construct a bridge; we never gave a commitment to construct a bridge.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Oh!

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: I said we are doing studies

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Oh! Oh!

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: to see what is feasible in the area, whether it be pedestrian or vehicular.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Oh! I am sorry.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Are you answering the question?

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: No, I am apologising.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Striking the gavel.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: I had erroneously assumed that you had an interest in linking those villages by bridge.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Obviously, you want more floor time, go ahead.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: What you said?

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Are you finished? I was not finished. Mr. Speaker, the area is questionable in our opinion as to whether it is feasible to put a vehicular bridge or a pedestrian. Those studies will be done and that is the answer to (b).

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: No.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: You want me to build a bridge to carry a vehicle where you cannot build.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Mr. Speaker,

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: But we never intended to build a bridge, Mr. Speaker...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: [Striking the gavel] let him clarify.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: I think the Minister has properly answered the question with respect to what we refer to as the Dam Wall, so that a river crossing rather than a motorable path would be acceptable, in terms of if you look at St ...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: But there is a general recognition, Mr. Speaker, of a need for a bridge to link those villages, the Largo Height and Dascent Cottage area with the other villages. In fact, if I may say to you, Mr. Speaker, there is also a security concern; if the bridge down at Garden's gate ever collapses the police force cannot come and respond to a National crisis in this country you know, there is a need for a by pass road.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: So, Honourable Member maybe if you remove the word "still" it might give clarity.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: It may, because they have previously so indicated, Mr. Speaker, but ... So, in other words Minister Francis there may be other points of that river in which you may want to link the villages, not necessarily the Dam Wall area.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Is this question turning into a supplementary?

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: No, I am assisting your ignorance.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I had asked him to explain the question. You could respond.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, I was not finished you know.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Oh, I see.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Seeing that I take all this commentary, Mr. Speaker, this administration since I have been there and other Ministers have never said that we intend to build a bridge there, so I do not know where this still intend to build a bridge came from. That seems to be a commitment of a former

administration before the Unity Labour Party. We had looked at island also from Green Hill over, the possibility of doing a pedestrian joining of those two areas because that is just as critical as what the Honourable Member is talking about. The existing entrance between Dascent Cottage and Largo Heights, Mr. Speaker, is very precipitous; very precipitous, it is a dangerous area and has to be studied properly, so I am not giving a commitment. I have never a commitment and I am not giving a commitment to building a bridge there or what type of bridge. We will do something, if it is a bridge it has to be elevated substantially over the ravine, both areas that he is talking about are pretty heavy when the floods come down.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Question No. 12 Honourable Member for North Leeward.

12. *The Honourable Roland Matthews, Representative of North Leeward asked the Honourable Minister of Housing Informal Human Settlements, Physical Planning, Lands and Surveys:*

The property of Ms. Susan Isaacs of Sharps, Chateaubelair was completely destroyed during the passage of hurricane Tomas. To date, she has not received any assistance from the government amidst many promises:

- a. *will the Honourable Minister please state if the government is prepared to assist Miss Isaacs in any way; and*
- b. *If so, what form of assistance will she receive and when will this be done?*

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Minister of Housing, Informal Human Settlement, Physical Planning.

HONOURABLE CLAYTON BURGIN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this indeed is a very interesting question from the Honourable Member and I want to answer the question not only for the parliament but for all who have suffered damages and are listening because persons are coming for assistance on a daily basis not only for Tomas but other related incidents as well. Mr. Speaker, I do not know about amidst many promises because I have never made that one so I do not know about that. Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt in my mind that the Honourable Members are aware that hurricane Tomas a category 1 storm armed with winds up to 90 miles per hour visited our land on the 30th ... 2010 and it left behind mass devastation particularly in the north of the mainland.

Mr. Speaker, professionals in the civil service who did the preliminary assessment of the damage indicated that numerous homes were severely damaged and the banana industry was destroyed. The professionals were of the opinion that poor construction methods were the principle cause of most of the damage; particularly where the construction methodology employed was not consistent with the national building code. They essentially affirmed that roof tops were not built to [withstand] the fierce winds associated with the storm or hurricane. Mr. Speaker, approximately 1200 persons requested assistance from the Ministry of Housing and to date more than 600 households have been given assistance valued at \$6.5 million consisting of new constructions as well as partial repairs. Approximately 75 houses have had to be completely reconstructed and expensive repairs have been done. Mr. Speaker, on completion of the damage assessment and the submission of a statement on the

accompanying project, cost for the work to be done, the Cabinet of this country had to secure funding for the recovery programme. In other words the Cabinet of this country had to realise that it was urgent and necessary to provide as much households as possible with as much assistance as was possible and necessary and so every effort was made to provide a substantial amount of assistance to as many persons as possible in order to facilitate their return to a situation of normalcy.

So, may I remind this Honourable House, Mr. Speaker that arrangement also had to be made to house several families in shelters and this also increased the cost of the recovery programme. Funding for this recovery programme came from several sources but the generous contributions which this country received from the friendly governments and organisations could in no way meet the needs of every single household that was affected by the passage of hurricane Tomas.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, there are certain procedures which must be followed by all citizens when reporting damage done to their properties during the passage of a national disaster. Certainly, any family whose house was damaged during Tomas was required to make a report to the Ministry of Housing through the Housing and Land Development Corporation and also to the National and Emergency Management Office (NEMO) following which members of the assessment team visit to note the extent of the damage and then to craft an appropriate programme for the way forward. Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, I want to say here that each individual household must also make huge effort in times of disaster, to help him or herself while seeking assistance from government. Because it is inconceivable anywhere in the world for government to provide all that each household affected during the disaster needs. Therefore, there is an enormous high need for patience and understanding as well as for the realization that the available resources for assistance in the time of disaster would eventually be exhausted.

In other words it is unreasonable for any one to expect that government can meet everyone's need, particularly in times of disaster. It is therefore likely, Mr. Speaker, that the resident of Chateaubelair, to whom the Honourable Member refers, will in much the same way as many other citizens who have been affected by the visit of Tomas receive some support for her damage property whenever the necessary resources become available. In the meantime I am confident that the Honourable Member for North Leeward will himself understand and appreciate that as well. So, Mr. Speaker, the old adage rings true in this regard one hand cannot clap. So, I want to implore the member that we have to look at the bigger picture and see how we all can come together to assist everyone in times of disaster. Much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATTHEWS: Supplementary Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary question.

Supplementary Question

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATTHEWS: Before I ask the Supplementary, I would just like to inform the Honourable Minister that Ms. Isaacs did report to NEMO and also to the Housing and Land Development Corporation, so they know about it. The question can the Minister please state how much financial assistance

was received by the government to assist persons who suffered during Tomas? [Interjection] Well, from friendly governments and organisations, so could you please state how much in terms of monetary terms, how much was given or received by the government.?

HONOURABLE CLAYTON BURGIN: Now, I said that we spent \$6.5 million and that would include from the government and from other donor persons. I did not bring figures of exactly who give this and who give that: just a round figure that I have.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question No. 13 Honourable Member for North Leeward.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATTHEWS: So, while Ms. Isaacs continue to *scrunt* a living here and there I would now ask question No. 13. [Interjections]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: [Striking gavel] Sit please, tell me, tell me.

HONOURABLE CLAYTON BURGIN: You see, I go easy on the Member because there is a lady in Chateaubelair whose house was destroyed by fire completely and you did not mention that.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. [Interjections]

HONOURABLE CLAYTON BURGIN: You see, I did not want to say those things, you know [inaudible] so next time tell him be careful, because when I answer, I answer fulsomely and give...

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: You want to tell him which one to ask, but I never.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question No. 13

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: The fire was about six months ago, this one is about one year ago.

13. *The Honourable Roland Mathews, Representative of North Leeward asked the Honourable Minister of Agriculture, rural Transformation, Forestry and Fisheries:*

- a. *What plan does the Ministry have for this facility; and*
- b. *does this plan include reopening the facility within the first quarter of 2012?*

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Minister of Agriculture, Rural Transformation, Forestry and Fisheries.

HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL: Mr. Speaker, the Chateaubelair facility was built in 1994 since its establishment the operations were mainly storage and sale of ice, a minimal storage of fish and a minimum or limited supply of fuel. Mr. Speaker, the operations continued in a very limited way until 2004 when the

Centre was leased to the Chateaubelair Fisheries Cooperatives. The Cooperatives began its operations but the business was not sustainable. Indeed the sale of fuel would have been the main driver of the business and the capacity of storage of fuel at that facility was indeed too small, though at its opening the facility had some fuel there would have been tremendous problems for the provider to supply fuel to the facility. So, even when the Chateaubelair Co-op endeavoured to have that part of the business going the provider indicated in no uncertain terms that their supply was too small hence no fuel would be delivered less than what the truck will deliver.

So, the Chateaubelair Co-op had problems, equally when the facility was built, the facility did not have a jetty and this further created limited operations at the facility. The Chateaubelair Co-op then gave up; they became inactive and so due to their inability the Registrar of Cooperatives de-registered the Chateaubelair Cooperatives in 2009. Since then Mr. Speaker, the Fisheries Division has been working with JICA that is the Japanese International Corporation Agency to assist in the repairs and to assist in redesigning and to further operationalise the facility. At the moment BRAGSA has been asked to provide the estimates and the Fisheries Division is in a process of reorganizing the overall management of the Fisheries facilities here in St Vincent and the Grenadines. And so there is a document of the overall operations that is now being produced by the Fisheries Department and will be submitted to the Cabinet for further consideration, so basically there is where we are with that facility Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Question No. 14 Honourable Member for North Leeward.

14. *The Honourable Roland Matthews, Representative of North Leeward to ask the Honourable Minister of Rural Transformation, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries:-*

For several weeks now the quality of banana fruits exported to the UK FROM St Vincent and the Grenadines is way below the required standard.

- a. Will the Honourable Minister please state what percentage of the bananas exported to the UK has been rejected from Load Week 25 through to Load Week 45; and*
- b. what is the reason given for the rejection?*

HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL: As far as the Ministry of Agriculture Rural Transformation, Forestry and Fisheries is aware no bananas have been rejected here in St Vincent and the Grenadines for Week 26-45 absolutely none. Mr. Speaker, since the resumption of bananas all bananas that have been produced at their ports being Campden Park or Kingstown all bananas have been exported to the UK

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATTHEWS: [Inaudible – mike not in use] exported to the UK that is the question.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: [Striking the gavel] could you allow the Member to answer. I am getting...

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: You are sucking it in.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: No, I am not sucking it in. I am getting a bit weary of this issue. [Interjection] I am saying that a Member has the opportunity to ask for a supplementary question, if he finds the answer is not satisfactory, he can ask a supplementary question to clarify the issue. You cannot judge the Minister yet until he has completed his answer; allow him please to answer his question. [Interjection] Go ahead answer your question.

HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL: Mr. Speaker, [Interjections]

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: You trivialize everything.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: No.

HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL: At moment little or no inspection of bananas are being done here at the port. The reason for that, Mr. Speaker, is because WINFRESH will incur added expenditures and so have reverted to allowing the bananas to go through to the extent whereby after 50 years of banana production and understanding the quality required that WINFRESH would have taken the position to allow bananas to go through to the UK. Mr. Speaker, when the bananas arrive in the UK they go into the ripening room and so they are then after a period of time removed to the degree of ripeness that is required to the Supermarkets. But of course, Mr. Speaker, it is at this point that an assessment of the fruit is done and virtually every box of banana has to be opened. And I indicated this morning in terms of the assessment as the defects of our banana that on average our PUW scores stands at around 66% and I identified of it 34% of those bananas the defects. Some of it would be rejectable because you can find depending on the degree of ripeness that they can be shifted in different boxes. Where there is Crown rot; Crown rot is completely not accepted. But if you want a broad-based picture you can say 34% of the bananas will be below the required standard. The acceptable standard of our PUW's score is 85% and therefore 34% as what I indicated this morning are bananas that would not meet the required standard. I am much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question No. 15, Honourable Member for South Leeward.

15. *The Honourable Nigel Stephenson, Representative of South Leeward asked the Honourable Minister of Transport, Works, Urban Development and Local Government:*
- a. *Will the Honourable Minister please state whether or not there is a relocation cost allocated in the contract for any property in the apparent path of the proposed Vermont/Francois Bridge;*
 - b. *If yes, how much money is it; and*
 - c. *Who is the owner of the property in question?*

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Minister of Transport Works, et cetera. Transport and Works your question 15.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that Members will make public statements and then come to this parliament to try and confirm their own public statements. The Honourable Member has been on radio pontificating on this matter, and I wish to refer to Standing Order 20 (g) Roman numerals viii:

“Asking whether statements in the press or of private individuals or unofficial bodies are accurate”.

The Honourable Member went on Nice Radio and said that he was told that there is a relocation cost in the contract; well, go to the unofficial source and the private source. Because inside of my Ministry, Mr. Speaker, I have the update position what you want to get from an official source and a private source you can go and say that. When I address the question to me last parliament about the awarding of the contract for that same matter of the Vermont Bridge I made certain statements there which can be found in the Hansard, Mr. Speaker. Today I wish to state that this matter of the Vermont Bridge there is a provisional sum and that matter is under review by my Ministry. We have had some discussions on the subject matter and that is all I am prepared to state on the matter today; because they are ongoing decisions and in provisional sums changes can be made whenever and wherever according to policy. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Mr. Speaker, supplementary please.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary question

Supplementary Question

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Mr. Minister, could we now say on whatever I have said on radio is it that there is a confirmation that there was an allocation of money for the relocation of that particular property, bearing in mind that you said at the last sitting of parliament that the government has no money and that no money at all would be given [inaudible] the relocation.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: So, the supplementary question is which one, the first one or the last one?

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Well, you answer them both.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, just a minute, as a matter of fact you cited rule 20 (g) viii and you should not really be answering the question since it was a matter that was pontificated in the public.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: I so take your advice, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: And therefore ...

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: [Inaudible – mike not in use]

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that issue is not over.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: That issue is what?

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: It is not done it is not finished [inaudible].

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I am saying to you, I want you to move on to question No. 16.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: I am going to move on, but I am simply saying that that is not finished.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Could we proceed with question No. 16, for me please. Question No. 16 Honourable Member for South Leeward. That is the issue I am dealing with right now.

16. The Honourable Nigel Stephenson, Representative of South Leeward asked the Honourable Minister of Transport, Works, Urban Development and Local Government:

Given the enormous volume of water which flows from Top Questelles and channeled into Coconut Range and exits in a distributary along the Campden park playing Field causing damage to property and flooding to the road along the playing field after heavy and persistent rainfall:

- a. Will the Honourable Minister please state what corrective measures will be implemented to remedy the situation; and*
- b. when will such work commence?*

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Minister of Transport and Works.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, I understand the concern of the Honourable Member for South Leeward. The area that he is referring to receives a lot of run-off water and the housing development in the area has not helped. In fact, Mr. Speaker, a lot of this water comes from a place you called Shuffler, and they have another name they call it Junker Rain. If you call a place Junker Rain you could imagine the amount of water coming out of there and this water goes down to lower Questelles. There are many persons in this parliament today official and non-official Mr. Speaker, who know the amount of water and the effects of it. Mr. Speaker, it is a matter that we have to manage; some things have been put in place and there is a cross over here and there and some little back walls and drains, concrete bottoms have been done in different locations over the years because this did not exist yesterday.

There was one time when there were no houses in this valley, there was one time when no houses except ... because that area in Shuffler was a quarry and you can see that large dirt drain that comes across the road when the road was widened by Milton Cato when the quarry was closed There is an underground culvert there where some of the waters in fact has been misdirected by residence and where the wall was collapsing and we have just now repaired where there was that depression there was a lot of water that comes down there that goes down to the bottom. So, I understand the Honourable Member's concern about there, it is a place that is pretty close to my heart. I am a Campden Park man, I was born down there, lived there briefly but I still hold very close connections around that Questelles, Campden Park and Lowman Bay area so I would expect that we will continue to manage it in that we will do some pieces here and there to try to alleviate it over the years. To do this it is going to be a major Capital Project, Mr. Speaker, and I do not see it in the immediate future. Thank

you. [Interjections] No, I never said gardens; there was also a stud centre at Campden Park if that is what you want to say. [Interjections] Thank you very much.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question No. 17 Honourable Member for South Leeward.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Thank you, very much, Mr. Speaker. Before I ask this one I would just like to assist the Honourable Minister of Works the most pressing requirement there would be to remedy a drain that is in the vicinity of one of your very strong supporters down there, from the Labour side and everybody knows who Nicole is. And there is a piece of drain there that is drastically eroded and their house being adjacent to the drain is actually flooded after heavy rainfall. So, I will assume that you will give some consideration to that, so, I am making representation on behalf of a member a strong supporter of the Unity Labour Party.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. [Interjections]

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Do not worry about that. [Laughter]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I hope you and the Minister on talking terms, because you can discuss that with him. [Laughs]

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Mr. Speaker, my hands are clean, my heart is pure.

17. *The Honourable Nigel Stephenson, Representative of South leeward asked the Honourable Minister of Transport, Works, Urban Development and Local Government:*

Will the Honourable Minister please state whether strong support for the ULP is a prerequisite for repairing roads in St Vincent and Grenadines?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Minister of Transport and Works.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, I see the comment just before this one is a prelude to this question. And all I would say to the Honourable Member from South Leeward is that I am sure that my supporter Nicole will understand what I just said, I hope you can convince you supporters to understand as well.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I guess it is a one line answer

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, this question deserves a long answer and I could keep you here until 2:00 o'clock this afternoon but I know how you feel on it. Mr. Speaker, the answer to this question is straight and simply no: that is the answer.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Mr. Speaker, supplementary please.

Supplementary Question

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Will the Honourable Minister please explain the statement that he made at a political meeting in Retreat that says:

“If Ralph Gonsalves is repairing roads in his constituency, South Rivers and Park Hill will be done first; and therefore ...”

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: What is the relevance to this particular issue?

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Nah! Nah! Mr. Speaker, would I be allowed to finish my question.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay, fine finish your question.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: The Honourable Minister was a chairman of that meeting and he actually made that statement that if Ralph Gonsalves is going to repairs work in his constituency Park Hill and South Rivers would be done first because that is where they have strongest support and likewise in South Leeward if repairs is going to be done it has to be done in Vermont and that is one day after I made a call to the radio station saying: giving the bad state of the road in Questelles I was inviting the community to assist in repairing that road. The Minister was saying I saw what happening and I became *bazadee*. So, is there an order of priority with respect to support for the Unity Labour Party? [Knocking on the desk]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: But are you asking the same question again. In your supplementary aren't you asking the same question: “if there is an order of priority for ...” Honourable Minister could you just forget about this.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: [Inaudible – mike not in use]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Yes, but you came back and asked the same question.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to answer him.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I heard you said, Mr. Speaker, that you no longer vet the questions, what they put in what anyone puts in. I just want to draw attention to this Mr. Speaker, 20 (f):-

“A question should not contain argument, inferences, opinions imputations epithets, ironical expression or hypothetical cases”.

There are several limbs of that rule which would cover questions of this kind and Mr. Speaker, while I am on it let me say this: I heard what Minister Francis said and I would say that that is not an accurate representation of what Minister Francis said. But Mr. Speaker that is not the point which I want to make I just want to make this factual statement. [Interruptions] I am not contradicting myself, no Mr. Speaker, I am stating first of all a proposition in law as embedded in the Laws and then I am making the second statement, the statement which the Honourable Member for South Leeward made that the Minister of Transport and Works is

alleged to have said, the allegation which he is making is not correct. What he said was not what Minister Francis said, they must report correctly what the persons say. I am not going to say what he said, and I will add this just a matter, it is true that in the constituency of North Central Windward, Park Hill and South Rivers remain bedrock but so too every single part of the constituency of North Central Windward, I win by over 82% of the votes and just as a matter of interest the first place which got done is the part of the road outside of Park Hill and South Rivers, I just want to make that point.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I need to...well the Honourable Prime Minister raised an issue here and I just want it to be established, it is not that I am not concerned about the questions that come before this Honourable House, it is not that I want to be careless and carefree about whatever comes here but I have made attempt to correct and have certain questions adjusted and I know I was maligned because of that and I also found when I discussed perhaps a particular question with a Member of Parliament who normally will have to answer, they would say, alright leave the question, we will deal with it in Parliament. Because Members, I am on record of asking Members to make some adjustments to the questions, as a matter of fact one time they discussed on with people, I saw that and the matter was explained and I said, ok, fine, let the question come, I saw, oh we gain a victory, you know and all that kind of situation developed. So I say let the questions flow, we will deal with them when they come to Parliament we will apply the rules if the rules have to be applied. If a Member sees a question that is not in accordance with the rules and raised the objection, I will deal with it accordingly. And that is my reason for saying I am going to allow questions to go. Thank you, we continue our discussion, our questions and answers and we are now on to question No. 18. [Interjection] No, no, no, I aint want no break, I'll take the break at the end of questions. I am all right I have stamina. Question No. 18.

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

In light of the reporting of cases of domestic violence and gender based violence within our society and given the importance of involving men as partners in the fight to end gender based violence, would the Honourable Minister please state:

- a. *Whether the Gender Affairs Department has commenced its plan to train and network with men as partners in advocacy and action focusing on relationships between violence and gender.*
- b. *How many men have been trained by this program whose target is December 2011.*
- c. *How many men will be trained by December 2011.*

HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON: Much obliged, Mr. Speaker. The answer to Part A of the question is yes, Part B, full Cari-Man initiative workshops in Caribbean male action network, initiative workshops were held focusing on gender based violence between February and May 2011. Over 150 men were exposed to the information, 44 police recruits, 56 senior police officers and community based organizations, 27 men in Rose Hall and 17 in Troumaca, totaling 144 men were trained. And if I may say, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, the Department of Youth Affairs in the Map Empowerment Project started in October of

this year, the main objective of this programme was to increase male involvement and action in reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS, fostering an environment in which men and women can enjoy equitable healthy and happy relationships. And this project include designing and conducting a trainer workshop to programme designing and facilitating male outreach workshops in at least three specified communities, we have not identified those communities but we are working on that. Developing an internet presence for the programme including a website for social networking and implementation of a media campaign, development of activities, sports training materials and mentoring programmes.

Actually, Mr. Speaker, the Gender Affairs division over this weekend and the upcoming weekend we are having an activity in the Green Hill area where the Ministry will be partnering with the young men on the block there and engaging them I believe in soft ball cricket, but before the cricket is played they will have some initial discussions and so on. How many men will be trained by December 2011, Mr. Speaker, we are continuing to work on this project, the necessary component and phases of the project are ongoing and by December quite a few more men will be trained in this programme, Mr. Speaker.

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

Would the Honourable Minister of Family and Social Development please state:

- a. Whether a barrister-at-law has been assigned to deal with victims of child abuse.*
- b. If yes, when was this assignment done*
- c. Whether parenting seminars and family therapy workshops have been completed and how many parents have benefitted to date.*

HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, there has been no assignment of any Barrister at Law to the Ministry to deal with victims of child abuse, the Ministry of Legal Affairs has advised us that due to staffing constraints the assignment of a Barrister for our Ministry is not possible at this present and we know that persons can go the Attorney General's Chambers for legal aid in matters of this nature. So no assignment has been made. Yes parenting and family therapy workshops were held throughout the state, including the Grenadines, implemented by various divisions within the Ministry. 487 parents benefitted from these sessions, the family therapy training sessions are continuing at the Liberty Lodge Boys Training Center and that is specific to the parents of the boys who are housed there. Other targeted Parent Teachers' Associations teen mothers and parents of children who are identified by the various schools received ongoing training. The Ministry of National Mobilisation has also partnered with the Basil Charles Educational Foundation and if may say just this morning in relation to that, the Basil Charles Foundation has handed over several cots, brand new cots to pre-schools here in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and we want to, from this Parliament to express our gratitude to the Basil Charles Foundation for the tremendous work that they have been doing. The Foundation there has a parenting programme for the pre-schools in areas of feeding, hygiene

and helping the parents to put the proper meals in place for the children to take to schools with them. Much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

Supplementary Question

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE: In light of the answer the Honourable Minister gave, I know he gave a figure in terms of the number of parents that have benefited, I just wanted to know whether or not he could say if his department has achieved the goal of 10 parenting seminars because this was indicated in the Estimates of 2011 and I was just wondering if it is in harmony with that or if this is just a combined figure in terms of all the interventions.

HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON: I would say that we... the Ministry have had I would say more than 10 parenting programmes and parenting programmes would continue, we are redefining the CAP programme and next year also more work would be done.

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

Can the Honourable Minister indicate:-

- a. Whether there has been any training and employment of Home Help Care Providers to date for the year 2011.*
- b. If so, how many have been trained and how many have been employed.*
- c. Has there been any assessment this year of this program among beneficiaries.*

HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON: Mr. Speaker, I love when the Opposition asks questions of this nature especially in relation to the home helpers programme. I remember when it came to this Parliament, we did not have any support from the other side, actually they said that we are sending people in old people's homes to clean mess and these sorts of things and so on and we know it, but today they have realized that this is a very important programme [Applause] a very important programme that you are so concerned about it. [Applause] Because I am a good Anglican they say is the [inaudible] family so we taking good care of the family.

Mr. Speaker, let me just say, in the programme for this year there are 52 home helper assistant, they receive \$867 per month, there are 35 home help providers they receive \$938 per month and we have two supervisors who receive \$1200 per month making a monthly payment to these home helpers and supervisors and so on \$80,000 per month, that is significant sums of money. Question, whether there has been any training and employment to Home Care Health Providers for the year 2011, the answer is no. We are working and fine tuning the work that the Home Care Helpers do and we are partnering with the Ministry of Health to get this programme, the discussions are on the way and we are hoping to have at least 20 new Home Care Helpers trained within now and at the end of December 2011. We have to improve on what the Home Care Helpers do, we want to encourage them and to help them so that they will be able to assist the persons in giving insulin

when they go to the homes to assist their Community Nursing Aids and so on. So this is why we are fine tuning the programme.

Has there been any assessment for this year among beneficiaries? The answer, the plans are in place to have this assessment done by December of this year. I am much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

Supplementary question

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in light of the Honourable Minister's answer that there has been no training and employment of Home Help Care Providers for the year 2011 and also that there has not been any assessments of the programme among the beneficiaries and in light of the fact that in the estimates for 2011 they promised to train and employ a further 30 in addition to the 15 that were trained and employed the year before and they also promise to do assessment by June 2011, they promise to train and employ an additional 30 Home Care Help Providers by August 2011. Is it fair to say, Mr. Speaker, that the Honourable Minister is acknowledging here in this Parliament that his department has failed to carry out their work for the year 2011?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I do not know, isn't that seeking an opinion, seems so to me, which he would not answer. Honourable Members, I would not allow it, I think it is seeking an opinion which is not allowed under the rules. I would want to as we end the question to thank the Honourable Minister because two of these questions which the Member I thought might have mentioned it, were facilitated long after time for question would have been passed and I called the Minister and asked him if he would facilitate answering these two questions and without any hesitation he said yes he will and I think one of those questions that was down before was also adjusted as a result of the Minister's...and I want to thank him very much for that.

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE: Mr. Speaker, I was actually going to acknowledge it but I awaited the answer to the supplementary, you see but he did not allow the supplementary, but I have no problem with acknowledging that because I spoke to the Minister myself and he was willing to facilitate the questions at the late hour. I think that is important in the interest of accountability to the people who listen to us here in the Parliament.

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

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, if I may be permitted just to say this before I move the suspension for the luncheon period. We have had three hours of question time which is in the Parliamentary system one of the mechanisms, one of the devices for eliciting information and holding Government to account and Mr. Speaker, we used to ask a full complement of questions, the answers used to be very brief when I was in the Opposition, so the question time would go through within an hour. We have made it our policy to answer the questions fully to respect the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. And for those who say that something is wrong in this country with Parliamentary democracy, we have just had three hours where the Government of this country had been held to account by the Parliamentary Opposition and they have received the answers on a wide range of matters from the economy to issues relating to Home Health wise and

sports and culture and roads and e tcetera. I just want to mention that there are some people who apparently would prefer Parliamentary accountability to take place not in Parliament but at the street corner, and there are many mock parliaments across St. Vincent and the Grenadines where apparently questions are to be answered and here in the Parliament. I just want to make that point on several...I am a graduate of those parliaments and other Parliaments, but I always insist that this being forum where accountability has to be sought and made and that is why I make the point as a matter of policy over the last 11 years we have answered questions fully.

Sometimes Mr. Speaker, even with bratac (bear tack)

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: Not necessarily truthfully.

HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Always truthfully, always truthfully.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: 12 (5)

HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker 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.

Question put and agreed to.

HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, it is now just after 2, I therefore move that this Honourable House do stand suspended for the luncheon period until 4 p.m.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Members this Honourable House do stand suspended until 4 p.m.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

3. FINANCIAL SERVICES AUTHORITY BILL, 2011

HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, the Financial Services Authority Bill had its first reading, it had been put before the Select Committee of this Honourable House, a report has been laid this morning, the minutes of the meeting of the Select Committee has also been laid. Mr. Speaker, I do not anticipate extensive debate on this matter in view of the wide spread discussion which we have had and I think agreement across the board. I want to begin by thanking, Mr. Speaker, all members of the Select Committee, Members of the Staff of the House of Assembly, the Clerk's Office and all the private sector entities from the various financial institutions, the non-bank financial institutions who came to the Select Committee and also persons from the Ministry of Finance and from the International Financial Services Authority.

Mr. Speaker, the name of the Bill is determined by the form and name of the body to be established and accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I shall for abbreviation follow the title as is, that is to say the Financial Services Authority Bill.

Accordingly I beg to move the Financial Services Authority Bill be read a second time.

Question put and agreed to.
Bill read a second time.

HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, first I would like to point out that in Clause (1) of the Bill it is affirmed that the Act will come into operation on such day as the Governor General may appoint by proclamation published in the Gazette and different days may be appointed for different provisions of this Act. Clause (2) of the Bill provides interpretation, definitions for certain words throughout the Bill in particular the word such as 'Financial Entity', 'Financial Services', 'Registered Entity' and 'Registry Legislation' are defined and the definitions are laid out very simply in the interpretation clause.

Part (2) of the Bill which covers Clauses (3 – 20) provides for among other things the establishment of the authority, its function, powers and staff. And provision is made in Clause (3) of the Bill for the establishment of the Authority, the Financial Services Authority as a corporate body with autonomy and independence. The Authority will have perpetual succession and a common seal and among other things will be given the power to sue and be sued. The composition of the Authority is set out in Schedule (1).

Mr. Speaker, I will pause here having reached the stage as to what this Authority is about. Mr. Speaker, in a wider context we know that there is a common piece of legislation to govern banks, commercial banks and that legislation incorporates the agreement made between sovereign states within the currency union, the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union to have a Central Bank and the Central Bank regulates banking, commercial banks. What we have had with the regulation of the non-banking financial institutions is a multiplicity of entities for example, the Supervisor of Insurance who is the Director General of Finance and Planning in the Ministry of Finance, that is the regulatory agency for insurance. For Credit Unions is the Cooperatives Division, for the Building and Loans Associations the building societies those bodies, at least the one of them here has been regulated until about four years or so ago by the Registrar of the High Court until we made an amendment in this Honourable House for that regulation to be done by the Ministry of Finance and of course the Offshore Financial Sector as it has been called before it has been properly renamed as the International Financial Services Sector, that is to say with International Banks, Trust, International Business Companies, the whole range of institutions in the International Financial Services Sector including international insurance companies who are regulated by the International Financial Services Authority, formally the Offshore Finance Authority. And of course the companies are regulated by the Commerce and Intellectual Property Office and CIPO - Commerce and Intellectual Property Office will still be the regulatory body for companies within the domestic sphere. But henceforth after this Bill becomes law there will be one single regulatory authority known as the financial services authority which will regulate the International Financial Services, the Credit Unions and the Insurance

Companies and the Building Societies. And if you look at the Schedule you will see the various pieces of legislations which are affected by this establishment of this authority.

Mr. Speaker, we have had problems throughout the region indeed throughout the world with regulation of banks and especially of non-banking financial institutions. The melt down of financial institutions and insurance companies in the United States of America for example, you remember the story with AIG the insurance company too big to fail, they had to be bailed out. We saw the problems of regulation here in the Caribbean in several countries involving insurance companies like CLICO and British America. The entities responsible for regulating Credit Unions, the Cooperatives Division, let us face it the Cooperative Division is useful to do training of personnel for certain administrative work and like but they do not have the capacity to properly regulate what are now multimillion dollar financial institutions like the Credit Unions. So that is why we are having an entity which will be properly staffed with regulatory powers. Persons may say well, why do we want to regulate the insurance, the credit unions in this way, well Credit Unions are no longer penny organisations, there are hundreds of millions of dollars in deposits by depositors and we have clear guidelines for the regulation. For instance you know, you may go to a Credit Union meeting and people may decide that the Credit Unions should buy up a lot of property in Kingstown, well that may be problematic, maybe you should buy up some but do not buy up too much real estate as a proportion of your deposit because if the bubble burst people are going to have problems in getting their money. We have similar problems with similar regulations in relation to banks so why not in relation to multimillion dollar organizations and have them properly regulated.

The Credit Union Movement at first was a little uncertain but I think what has happened in several countries including what happen in Trinidad with the Hindu Credit Union, that it is felt that look it is better to move in a manner and support governments in their protection of the members' deposits and I also speak as a member of three Credit Unions. I am a member of GECCU, I am a member of the ULP Credit Union and I am a member of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Teachers Union Cooperative Credit Union, and I have an interest in having the Credit Unions properly regulated so too I have an interest in having the banks properly regulated because I have deposits in banks, in insurance companies and all the financial institutions but more than anything we need to regulate them properly because we have to ensure that the stability of the Financial System is maintained. Right now in St. Vincent and the Grenadines the liabilities in respect of CLICO and British America though they are assets and I am not going to talk about the assets now, I just want to give the extent of what the exposure will be, in excess of EC\$370 million which is about 20% of the GDP of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the nominal GDP is in the region of \$2 billion, so it is a substantial exposure.

The Building and Loan Association or any building society, they were at time when they were again penny organisations, they were a penny organisation, now they are a huge multimillion dollar organization with millions of dollars worth of assets. We have to make sure that people who have been putting their money in the Building and Loan that there is proper regulation. But I want to make this point that in having a single regulatory unit, we would be utilizing the existing legislation for the regulation, save and except for the regulatory authority and one or two consequential amendments, the substance of the pre-existing regulatory for Credit Unions, for Building and Loan Societies, for Insurance Companies, for the International Financial Institution the law remains the same save and except for the regulatory regime changing in terms of the

structures and any consequential amendments. So I want to make that point. And I will also swiftly make the point that for some of those non-financial institutions especially the legislation relating to building societies, that legislation is very outdated and the new regulatory authority though it will be more professional, thorough and scientific it has to regulate the body with an antiquated piece of legislation. So that early next year we have to bring an amendment, serious amendments to the current law governing building societies. And we have some amendments to make also in relation to the credit union legislation, though the changes to be made to the credit union legislation are not as serious because we had in 1990's made amendments to the credit union legislation, early in the 2000's but we have also agreed that the credit union legislation should have amendments and the credit unions are also on board with us because that piece of legislation had been agreed upon by the Central Bank. There were some reservations about some issues but those have now been resolved.

Mr. Speaker, as we are at the issue of the authority, the Single Regulatory Authority I want to make this important point, we are a little bit delayed in St. Vincent and the Grenadines compared to one or two other countries which have established the Single Regulatory Authority because it took a while for me to be convinced that we should put everything under the Single Regulatory Authority, the Financial Services Authority. I thought that perhaps we could still maintain the International Financial Services Authority for the purpose that it had been established and do a financial services authority bill for one authority to address Credit Unions, insurance companies, the building societies, money services, authorities like Western Union and Money Gram and all the various services because I was pondering on the question practically as to whether in the circumstances of St. Vincent and the Grenadines we should put everything together. And it took a couple of visits from the consultants from CARTAC, the Caribbean Research and Technical Advisory Centre and the officials in the Ministry of Finance and very importantly the experience out of Grenada to convince me that we should do it in the manner in which we have this year. Because we have to seek truth from facts and have the truth validated by the real world and not to address simply abstractions and the actual experiences in Grenada have persuaded me that this is the way to go plus of course there was a heavy weight of opinion from CARTAC and from the officials in the Ministry of Finance. So that is why we are here with it. There may be other members who may feel and I know the view was canvassed at the Select Committee stage and I believe the Leader of the Opposition had said that he had some reservations as to whether we should have everything in the Single Authority but I had those reservations myself initially but was persuaded that this was the proper way to go as we are now here.

Mr. Speaker, I want to re-emphasize this point, regulation of non-banking financial institutions, efficacious regulation is absolutely necessary and desirable for them to be properly regulated because economic activity rests in the country as a whole particularly one like ours which is so small and open and structurally dependant and exposed with 50,000 persons who are in the economically active category, we cannot really afford the shock from financial instability because when that crumbles general economic activity is profoundly affected adversely. That is not just a theoretical proposition that is something which has been borne out in developing and developed countries alike. Of course I am addressing non-banking financial institutions but the same proposition goes for banking institutions, but that is not my focus today.

So, Mr. Speaker, as we proceed with the Bill having affirmed what we are doing with the authority and the context for it and the rationale, Clause (5) of the Bill sets out the functions of the authority some of which

include the administration of the specific enactment as set out in Schedule (2) and those specific enactments as set out in Schedule (2) Mr. Speaker, are the Friendly Societies Act, Building Societies Act, Registered Agent and Trustee Licensing Act, Mutual Funds Act, International Insurance Amendment and Consolidation Act, the Insurance Act, the International Banks Act and the Money Services Business Act. And you will note that in that list the Cooperative Societies Act is not mentioned in the Schedule but in the body of the statute the credit unions are mentioned because under Financial Entity, if you look at the definition it means;

- (a) Any entity or business which is governed by any of the Acts set out Schedule 2
- (b) A credit union.

And the authority will be responsible too for the administration of the Registry Legislation which includes International Trust Act, International Business Companies, Amendment and Consolidated Act and the Limited Liability Companies Act. The Limited Liability Companies Act for those who are uninitiated in this business please do not confuse that with a company in the domestic sector which is a Limited Liability Company.

Clause 6 provides guidance for the administration of the specified enactments and for instances where there is conflict between a specified enactment and an Act and this Act will prevail. Clause 8 sets out the powers of the authority. By Clause 9 the authority is empowered to examine a person carrying on an unlicensed financial service. And by Clause 10 the authority would be also able to issue guidelines. So you see there is a logic to how we progress in each of the Clauses. Clauses 12, 13 and 14 provide for the Executive Director and other staff of the authority, the staff of the authority will work under the direction of the Executive Director.

I should say, Mr. Speaker, because we want to begin this in January, we are already searching for senior staff including the Executive Director because it is important we have the Executive Director in place from early in the new year and then we can recruit other staff who would be responsible for the carrying out of this bit of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, if I may just say this, the Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund in many of their comments arising out of the November 16th Executive Board on the article four consultation for 2011, almost every single one of them who addressed this particular question commended the Government for the Financial Services Authority Bill and they were very pleased to accept our assurances that it would be passed before the end of this financial year and would go into operation early in the year 2012.

By Clause 15 the authority would be able to establish advisory committees; Clauses 16 and 17 would provide for the confidentiality of information of the authority or financial entities or registered entities.

I will just pause to say that there is a Bill which is before us which will touch and concern some of these matters called the International Corporation Tax Information Exchange Agreement Bill which I am hoping that we can have passed today also.

By Clause 20 the Minister of Finance would be able to give policy directions of a general nature to the authority and would be able to request information from the authority. But you would notice that the Minister would be required to put his directions in writing.

Part (3) sets out the enforcement powers of the authority and Part (3) covers Clauses 21 to 43. Clause 22 the authority would be able to request any information from a registered entity in addition to a financial entity. Clauses 23 to 25 provide for the appointment of an auditor, the recognition of breaches of the Act etcetera by a financial entity and reports of the auditor. By virtue of Clauses 26, 27, 28 and 29 the authority would be charged with investigative examination and enforcement powers. Clause 30 would exempt any person who is required to disclose any information under the Act from any liability to a breach of any enactment rule of law, agreement or professional code of conduct to which that person may be subject. Clause 31 creates an offense for not producing information to an examiner or investigator. Clauses 32 to 33 provide for remedial actions in relation to financial entities, while Clause 37 empowers the authority to cancel after consultation with the Minister of Finance, the license of a financial or registered entity in the situation set out in that Clause. Some of the usual ones in these kinds of legislations. Clause 38 empowers the authority to apply to the High Court for a freezing order to freeze property of a Financial Entity in the circumstances prescribed in that section. Clauses 41 and 42 provide the establishment and procedure of an appeals tribunal. The tribunal would be at task to hear all appeals under the Act and appeals under the specified enactments. So for instance the appellate authority tribunal in the insurance act would give way to the tribunal in this particular act.

Part 4 deals with the financial provisions of the authority and Part 5 contain series of miscellaneous provisions. In that regard Clause 54 allows the Minister to prescribe certain fees, this Clause also allows the authority to collect on the Accountant General's behalf, fees prescribed under the Act or under any specified enactment or registry legislation and to recover such fees or other sums owed to the authority in any court of competent jurisdiction. Clause 56 sets out a fixed penalty scheme; it is an important clause whereby offenders can be offered the opportunity to discharge liability to conviction for any offence that they may have committed by paying a fixed penalty. Payment of the fixed penalty would be made by the Accountant General. The offences and penalties which forms part of the fixed penalty regime are set out in Schedule 5 and please note that they are largely of an administrative kind if you notice them. In Clause 21(3); 22(2); 31 and 40(2) so that I do not want you to feel that some of the other kinds of offences created, you can have fixed penalties only for a narrow set of essentially administrative offences so that we can proceed and get the Act, you know get people do their work in an effective way rather than to waste a lot of time.

Clause 58 empowers the Minister to amend Schedules 2, 3 or 5. By virtue of Clause 59 certain legislation would be amended and the amended laws are set out in Schedule 6 and you will see in respect of the building societies the registered agent and License Trusty Act, the International Trust Act, the Mutual Funds Act, the International Insurance Amendment and Consolidated Act, Consolidation Act, the Insurance Act, the International Banks Act, the Money Services Act, the International Business Companies Amendment and Consolidated Act, the Exchange of Information Act, the Limited Liabilities Company Act; in all of those you will see the regulatory authority, those provisions altering to make Financial Services Authority the sole regulatory body under those respective statutes. Then you come to 12 the Cooperative Societies Act in the Schedule 6 it again alters the authority from the registrar to the Financial Services Authority.

Mr. Speaker, Clause 61 would among other things dissolve the International Financial Services Authority and transfer certain assets, rights, obligations etcetera of IFSA to the Financial Services Authority and Clause 62 would repeal the St. Vincent and the Grenadines International Financial Services Authority Act, the IFSA Act,

chapter 108. So it is a very sensible and practical law, it is not very complex, I know non-lawyers find any piece of legislation complex giving the very nature of the wording of laws and one which is 60 pages is not essentially for non-lawyers bedside reading, but I think I have the best I can in a summary way to outline the framework. I want to reemphasize this and colleagues must bear this in mind, the Financial Services Authority Act save and except in the limited ways where alterations are made to the individual statutes in this particular Bill that the law to be administered for the purposes of regulation is the pre-existing legislation, in fact the existing legislation covering each of these non-financial institutions and that is why we need swiftly to amend the one which is weakest of all in terms of its regulatory base and substance that for Building Societies and of course there are some for the Cooperative Societies Act governing Credit Unions.

And on the Order Paper for today, Mr. Speaker, there is a very important amendment for the Insurance Act which will strengthen the hands of the registrar currently and also the hands of the successor organization, the Financial Services Authority, because we need in those circumstances to strengthen that piece of law right away to make that we have everything in order as far as is practicable in the current circumstances. Mr. Speaker, I am obliged.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to be very long on this Financial Services Authority Bill, 2011. I think all of us, Mr. Speaker, are aware of the developments that have taken place in the world economy particularly over the last four to five years and we have all seen on television, read in the newspapers of various failures relating to Financial Institutions that have taken place all over the world. And we have also heard a lot of discussions, Mr. Speaker, in relation to having a proper regulatory framework to deal with what we now see more clearly as a very serious problem. We in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Mr. Speaker, we ourselves and this is what this attempts to do, made to examine our own institutions, examine performance and make sure that we have a regulatory framework that can deal with the eventualities. Our own experience, Mr. Speaker, and our thinking and our concern have been heightened by what happened to CLICO, British American in our own experience here in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. We have seen the impact of on the lives of ordinary citizens in our country who have lost much of their savings, we have teachers and other public servants who have lost their gratuity and although efforts are being made to see in what ways we can recoup those it is going to be an uphill battle. So despite our small size our problem is large and therefore the need for improved regulatory framework is critical.

I have looked very closely Mr. Speaker, at this particular piece of legislation as a Member of the Select Committee and I have also looked at what had happened and I have also looked at the amendment that is proposed here in relation to, let me get the correct term, the Act to amend, the Insurance Act 306 of the laws of St. Vincent and the Grenadines which we will deal with later this afternoon. Mr. Speaker, our regulatory framework for the moment, and I think that was explained by the Prime Minister in his presentation, we have within the framework of some of our individual laws some of the necessary regulations and relation to banks we have that regulatory function being performed by the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank and what this new Bill, the Financial Services Authority Bill, seeks to do is to have a comprehensive regulatory framework for the non-bank financial institutions.

I raised a question and the Prime Minister referred to it, Mr. Speaker, in his own presentation, I raised a question and it is the question that still bothers me as to whether one institution can effectively deal with the multiplicity of different pieces of legislation that we have here in St. Vincent and the Grenadines governing non-bank financial institutions. I am not questioning in any way the need for a strong regulatory framework and; therefore I support a lot of what is said in the Bill but I still question, Mr. Speaker, whether one institution in St. Vincent can effectively regulate all of the institutions that we hope to cover. You know you had the regulatory framework in place for Insurance Companies, it had failed and there were people looking at that one institution and because of that failure we have this amendment which we are going to discuss later on this afternoon.

When I look, Mr. Speaker, at the specific enactments which are to be mended in this particular piece of legislation and I am going to go look at each of them, not in any detail but just to let you get my understanding of how I perceive this situation. We have first of all on Schedule 6, the Building Societies Act that is now to be regulated Building Societies by this new institution, we the registered agents and Trusty Licensed Act that too is to be regulated by this new institution. We have the International Trust Act that too is to be regulated by this Institution. We have next the Mutual Funds Act, chapter 154 which will be regulated by this institution. We have the International Insurance Amendment and Consolidated Act; that too is to be regulated by this Institution. We have the Insurance Act, Chapter 306; that too is to be regulated by this institution. We have the International Banks Act, Chapter 99; that too is to be regulated by this Institution.

We have the Money Services Business Act, Chapter 260 of our laws; that too is to be regulated by this institution. The International Business Companies Amendment and Consolidation Act Chapter 149; that too is to be regulated by this institution. We have the Exchange of Information Act Chapter 146; that too is to be regulated by this Institution; Limited Liabilities Companies Act Chapter 151 that too is to be regulated by this institution. We have the Cooperatives Societies Act Chapter 451, that too to be regulated. And now we are going to add others, credit unions, the building society thing like Building and Loan are now to be added for purposes of supervision. We have institutions which are being affirmed in terms of microfinance through the Credit Union Movement which are going to be subject to this regulatory environment that is being created here in this particular Bill and over time I expect that there will be more as our Financial Architecture deepens here in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Mr. Speaker, speaking from memory there are 47 banks in the OECS which are supervised by our Central Bank. In this Act here we will have hundreds of institutions that will operate within the framework of this piece of legislation and therein, Mr. Speaker lies my concern. I think the sections which show what it has to do [inaudible] and so on. I have no difficulty with any of them. I am yet to be convinced that one single institution can effectively supervise all of these institutions. The Prime Minister refer to the Grenada situation, I do not know a great deal about that but I think I know St. Vincent and the Grenadines, I know some things about the difficulties of recruitment of the relevant qualified personnel who on a day to day basis will have to carry out these responsibilities. The Offshore Finance Authority has been working diligently over the year just to deal with the offshore finance and I do not think they have their hold act together as yet. We are now going to repeal the law which has established that institution and put the Offshore Finance as well as the [inaudible] activities under a single institution.

The Prime Minister himself in his presentation, he did say so to be frank when we had the Select Committee Meeting and I raised the matter, he did say that he himself it took some time to convince him that one particular institution could effectively supervise all of the various institutions that come under this particular Act, that we are debating. He said it took visits from those...from CARTAC and others overseas to finally convince him that this could be done, I am not convinced. In my own view I would have left the banks as they are, which is the case, in terms of the offshore finance I would have left them with their own institution and every thing else I would have put under what is now called in this piece of legislation, the Financial Services Authority.

If you notice, Mr. Speaker, we have a Motion or some Resolution here on the Order Paper that speaks of the assets of the credit unions being somewhere in the order of three hundred and five plus million dollars and we have a number of those institutions to look at, not just one or two, you have seven or eight. Similarly with cooperative societies, there are some, I think in all, the number comes up to about seventeen or eighteen institutions and as I indicated earlier, they in fact have hundreds when they talk about the Offshore Finance Authority, and I think the Central Bank which has a staff of what, some time I check they had a staff of two hundred and something persons to look at the 47 banks that are in this region and they have their hands full trying to carry out the necessary supervision of those institutions. And it is true there may be some areas where even greater skills are needed in dealing with the commercial banks, but I am certain that in relation to cooperatives and some of the microfinance institutions that we say will now be coming of stream that will have to do a lot of the same work. And while I accept that the provisions made for the Financial Authority here, this one that we are dealing with today are good, I have no problems with them at all, I want to make that aspect clear, I attend the Select Committee and I think what is being put here is very good. But what's in the experience of the Central Bank with the kind of staffing that it has, looking at the Offshore Finance Authority here, also Financial Services legislation and the institution itself, I am not at all convinced that particular institution here can effectively and the emphasis is on effectively, supervised all of the non-bank financial institutions here in our country. I looked at the amendment which we will discuss later and an amendment which by the way I agree with totally, but the fact that I we have to that today is a reflection that even though you had one department supervising it, it did not work. We are going to be putting a lot under this institution and if it is to be effective then I would not like to tell you or guess what kind of staff it is going to have, if it is going to be effective. It is just to me a large, large bite based on what we in St. Vincent and the Grenadines know in the Public Service in terms of our ability to recruit in terms of our ability to manage and to supervise and the kind of commitment, Mr. Speaker, that will be required, the person in the top management of this institution will not even remember all the institutions they have to manage and I therefore have a great concern while I accept everything else about this legislation, I have a great concern about that this institution can effectively supervise all non-bank financial institutions in St. Vincent and the Grenadines including those to come.

The other day the gentleman which started the microfinance was thrown over the board internationally, he got a noble price for it you know, but it has grown beyond him and become so big that the supervisory functions started to fail and I saying we need to take another look as to whether this single institution can effectively supervise all of the non-bank finance institutions of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Further debate.

HONOURABLE SABOTO CEASAR: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to give my fullest support to the Financial Services Authority Bill for 2011. Mr. Speaker, when the history books are written, whether is in the next 20 years, next 30. The next 40 years or if God tarries, when the history books are written about the Financial and Global economic activities in the world during the first 10 years of this millennium, a very significant chunk of the writing in history will have to do and to deal with the issue of the Global Financial Crisis.

Mr. Speaker, St. Vincent and the Grenadines on a global scale is a very small and vulnerable nation in terms of an analysis of our economy, that is without dispute and taking into consideration our vulnerabilities and the possibility that we can easily be susceptible to financial shocks, we have to ensure that as a country, as a people, as a government, that we create the requisite legislative framework so that financial vehicles operating within our economy that they are working within a stable economic environment. Mr. Speaker, the area of Banking and Finance Law and Banking and Finance Jurisprudence is one that has not been explored to its fullest in the Caribbean and particularly in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the reasons are obvious. Our economy is smaller on a global comparatively speaking and a piece of legislation as the one we are here to discuss this evening is definitely a piece of legislation that is going to create a revolution in the manner in which we are going to regulate non-banking financial services.

But Mr. Speaker, for the young man on the block in Greggs or the young lady in Tokyo listening to us, when you hear the words Financial Service Authority Bill, sounds a bit complex, sounds like is something from the skies but I just want to explain it in a bit of details because this piece of legislation is definitely going to have an impact and it is designed to have a positive impact on the lives of every single Vincentian and the future of our economy. I would have listened to the Leader of the Opposition and his comments on the issue of whether or not this body and I may refer to it as the FSA as it is usually referred to in England, the Financial Services Authority, whether or not a single body will have the capacity and the competence in order to manage and regulate this very wide gamut in terms of the number of institutions and the multiplicity of issues that will have to be dealt with. But Mr. Speaker, what is this Bill really setting out to do? In common terms for those persons who invest or put their monies into these non-banking institutions we want to ensure that there is the proper and correct and most effective and efficacious legislative framework to ensure that when they put their monies somewhere it is safe.

Mr. Speaker, if you do a survey in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, in the OECS or in CARICOM, you will be surprised at the number of persons who do not have any confidence after the issue of CLICO and British American to invest their monies in institutions, you will be surprised at the number of persons who will say I rather revert to burying my money in a bucket or placing my monies under my mattress. In fact you go around in the villages, you meet teachers, you meet farmers who would have invested their last dollar in institutions and as I was reading in a newspaper earlier today, I cant remember the name and I wouldn't mention the name of the institution that was mentioned save to say in somebody's drawer in the office a US cheque was met valued, I think it was over US\$3 million [Interjection] US\$5 million stand corrected. You just leave the \$5 million in

your drawer, you need to go in my drawer you find a \$5 you will find a lot. But this is the significance of this piece of legislation we have to ensure that we create the correct jurisprudential ship so that financial institutions non-banking, that they fall in line and that the proper framework is there to protect the hard earned dollars of our citizens and that is basically what we are here to discuss this evening, the Financial Services Authority Bill, 2011.

Mr. Speaker, Banking and Finance Law is an area that I love dearly and as I listen to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition speaking about the necessity to scout for expertise, I do not know if when I grow older there may still be a vacancy, you see him laughing, but I know that my government will still be in office [Laughing] I just saying tongue and cheek man, I just laughing with you tongue and cheek. But when we look at the functions of the Authority in Clause 5, Mr. Speaker, if I may refer to the Bill and we see Clause 5 (1)A the Licensing Power of the Authority and the powers are extended in 5 A and B:

- C. the power of the authority to supervise and regulate the operations of financial entities,
- D. to promote, stability, public awareness and public confidence in the operations of financial entities

And that is very significant especially in an economy where we have to create and foster a very unique partnership between the Public Sector and the Private Sector, the Government cannot do everything but we have [to] ensure that the investment framework is there so that persons can invest in the Private sector and know that the companies and the businesses that they investing in that they are protected and that is where we are seeing the legislation addressing issues of stability, public awareness and public confidence under the functions of the authority, Clause 5 (D) in E it reads:

“To establish standards of institutional strengthening for the control and management of risk in the financial services sector and for the protection of customers of financial entities as well as creditors and the public.”

And Mr. Speaker, if I may revert to D, the issue of public confidence, when we speak of the public here, Mr. Speaker, we are not only speaking about the citizens in St. Vincent and the Grenadines but there are persons, foreign direct investors who come into your country and they want to use certain financial vehicles from within the jurisdiction and they would like to know that the jurisdiction from which they are coming, for example if they are coming from the United Kingdom where there is the financial services authority which is managed by the Financial Services and Market Act of 2000, that you have a similar kind of legislative framework in your country because I am certain that before a foreign direct investor invests in a jurisdiction the laws of the country is something that you have to take great consideration and great time looking into to ensure that the investments are secured.

Mr. Speaker, Clause 5(1) G speaks about the role of the authority in monitoring and ensuring compliance and yes it is definitely going to be a laborious task. This task is not going to be an easy one because of the multiplicity of issues which have to be dealt with on a daily basis. But whilst I agree to some extent with persons who question the workload that the authority will be faced with on a daily basis there are also some

connecting factors which cut cross institutions that if you have a single regulatory authority manning all of these institutions that you will be regulating with greater efficiency because you are dealing with the issues on a greater scale. And I hear my brother saying should, yes because whilst there is always the argument that you are to set up separate and different entities that could man these particular divisions and the Leader of the Opposition in his address would have mentioned some of the categorizations where in his feeling that you should have a separate regulatory entity dealing with these matters. But regulations and the supervision of these institutions it is just something that we have to ensure that we have the right expertise and persons have to be willing and able to take on this extreme task because it is definitely not going to be an easy one but it is one which is doable.

Mr. Speaker, if I may turn to the core principles in Clause 7 which are there as the guidelines for the Financial Services Authority;

- (a) The reduction of the risk to the public of financial loss due to dishonesty, incompetence or malpractice by or through the imprudence of persons providing financial services in or from within St. Vincent and the Grenadines.**

And these are significant aspects of the law which I know will definitely occupy a lot of their time but I think from my experience and my study of Banking and Finance Law, the hardest period in terms of regulating a diverse environment like the one that we will be regulating in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the hardest period in setting up an authority to regulate such a diverse financial environment will be in the setting up stage because once you have the requisite framework in place and you manage it you start to meet and interact with certain personnel it is therefore the duty of the authority to ensure that the proper managerial structures are in place to continue receiving the information and seeking information on a regular and timely basis. Mr. Speaker,

- (b) The protection and enhancement of the reputation and integrity of St. Vincent and the Grenadines in financial matters.**

And this will touch and concern some of the issues which I dealt with a while ago as to our attractiveness as a destination where persons can readily come as foreign direct investors and feel safe to invest in our financial environment. And (c) a very important point:

- (c) The need to counter financial crime both in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and elsewhere.**

So we also see that the authority will be dealing with issues of the solution of crime and particularly crimes concerning financial matters.

Mr. Speaker the general guidelines, how are we going to go about this. And we see the authority may after consultation with financial entities issue guidelines to financial entities and their affiliates for the purpose of;

- (a) Establishing codes of conduct to guide financial services sector**
- (b) Modernizing the financial services sector**

- (c) Promoting international standards and best practices**
- (d) The detection, prevention and deterrence of money laundering and**
- (e) The detection of funds allocated or use for financing of terrorism.**

But very importantly, Mr. Speaker, it is (b) the modernizing or modernization of the financial services sector and very importantly the effective functioning of a Financial Services Authority at the core of its functioning has to be the ease with which information is communicated. And I think that it is within our purview, it is within our doing to establish the requisite framework to ensure that this very important body that it functions for the betterment of the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and that it will place us jurisprudentially on the right path to protect those hundreds and thousands of persons who invest their hard earned dollars in our economy. I am obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker may I start first by saying that I regret very much that as a member of the Select Committee I was not able to attend as many of the meetings as were summoned but from the commencing meeting it was very clear that we were into a very important committee debate in furtherance of further shaping our financial architecture and regulating our society.

Mr. Speaker, let me just with your permission make a small aside. When at one stage I had completed my own studies, I had done the MBA in Finance and I was in fact two years into Law, I seriously thought I was going to make a living in the Offshore Financial Services Sector, and in fact I attended many of the training session that they have here by the Offshore Finance Authority, Puerto Rico and about the place but there was a specific incident I want to recall and I will say so publicly for the first time. I was invited with short notice by Parnel Campbell QC to his chambers for a meeting with some other people SWEB and Company who were in the Offshore Financial Sector and the proposal was put forward to me and I hustled off to Grenada in furtherance it was seemed to have been a very great opportunity. I went through the night in Grenada I met with all sorts of individuals, I went through the front door and the back door of Financial Authorities in order to do business and you come through one door and you go through the next, how accounts are kept and what accounts, the instruments that they sell, wined and dined with the best food and the world, even though I rented a bed I never touched it, I was back in a plane the next morning, back to St. Vincent excited that we were going to make the world of money. I think is a few months after that that biggest authority in Grenada, I think almost all of the top guard were arrested and jailed, the offers were too good to be true you know and I always count my blessings with the fact that I never sold one of those instruments. But it tells you, you can't be too careful in your diligence in this world of financial business.

Now the debating discussion before us this evening is not a partisan one as far as I understand it and even though there are different positions by the Prime Minister and that of the Opposition Leader, I do not get the sense that they are anyway antagonistic, in fact by his own admission, and I trust that I quote him correctly, at one point in time the Prime Minister himself was closer to the position than the Leader of the Opposition had in exercising the fair degree of caution in how one should proceed with these building blocks to an appropriate authority for regulating and supervising non-bank financial businesses in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and as I understood him he have said he took advantage of further professional advise and consultation, add his own deliberate judgement and bringing I suspect his own expertise in the matter to bear ultimately decided that he

would go for what I define and call the whole haul, one large umbrella body to take charge of all the non-bank financial services. Of course the Prime Minister is a Minister of Finance and has the benefit of experience, interfacing with sorts of sundry and all kind of institutions. On this side of the House, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition has a development bank, or Premier Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, also has his own serious experience in the field and I say that to make the point that there is an obligation to weigh the contributions carefully that's coming from both sides.

So Speaker, in the debate today thus far, we heard the Honourable Prime Minister argue that one of the dilemma that they faced in the United States who had the whole question of whether some of the institutions were to big to fail and I suspect the Government authorities procrastinated from one time to the other or until when the bottle finally hit the fan and a lot of people suffered and suffered badly. In that regard, Mr. Speaker, post that melt down on that failure, several issues have been raised that speaks to the whole governance issue, it includes of course, the whole of question of corporate governance, whether we needed to re-examine the fiduciary responsibilities of board of directors and management, so that shareholders could have greater degrees of certainty and protection, what measures of protection ought to be entertained in market driven societies and economies. The very area of auditing which features and looms large in this very debate...in this very serious debate whether or not auditors for example should be held accountable to the extent to which investors pays confidence in audit reports and whether theses reports needs to be refined, refashioned and to be more watertight in providing assurance; and I think that is still an ongoing debate as to what are the responsibilities of auditors in all this section...in all this matters.

In fact our own legislation here, you see we have the audit function again features, questions of creative accounting and creative accounting is not far removed from the CLICO [inaudible], portfolio analysis issues and one we did not mention today very much because its not a feature of our Vincentian Society in fact I believe of the whole OECS, the whole crepe of worthless paper derivatives we speak a little bit here about mutual funds and the deeper context may want to put some of those papers in to that basket but all of this, Mr. Speaker and the diligence that we can attach to this brings us to a judgment and we have a sufficiency of basis to proceed. The Offshore Financial Services relatively speaking is still new to us here in St. Vincent, in the OECS and in the Caribbean and in fact we see only recently the question has been revisited by France and the United States and the OECD countries I believe and countries like Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago, some of our better run or more developed money markets coming under the searchlight and under some heavy manners something that I am grateful that we have escaped from here in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines by taking the appropriate action over the period of time, but I say that to make the point, Mr. Speaker, that our own authority under different directors is still cutting it steep on perfecting the craft, the art, the science whatever term you want to give to it and facing the mountain challenges and as I understood the argument on this side from the Leader of the Opposition is that there is a cogent argument for leaving the existing institution that are now under the charge of the financial authority right where they are and consolidate the management there.

Now that is not cowardice, that is not being over cautious, is not being adverse to risk taking, it is being prudent, it is being practical and it is being guided by hard experience and it should be weighted for what it is worth that is we should go through the continual period of quiet but sound consolidation that is how I understood that too be read; and then we can look at another basket of non financial institutions that are not now

under the purview of the Offshore Financial Authority...or yes...or under the Banking Institutions and here now we are looking at the Building Societies, the Credit Unions and those sets of agencies and say look you know all credit to you over these last several years you have grown and grown enormously and its time enough for us to tighten our oversight of your activities. That is not an impractical approach for us to take in which case we may well end up in our societies with perhaps three sets of regulatory authorities, the Offshore Financial Authorities, the existing authorities for banking and these other...this third group, and that as time progress and we have consolidated we say look you know I think we have got it right know.

We have merged authority two and authority three into a single authority and perhaps all three because and well not all three because we are looking at non-banking the two of them because we now have it right, we have management expertise because I suspect these agencies are going to have a fair degree of staff, of lawyers, accountants, economists, management scientist, good solid administrators, cooperatives, secretaries a field that we do not look...pay a lot of attention to that can bring these agencies under very, very professional management and if the truth be told, Mr. Speaker, that is an approach that should be given some weight and I am not going to come down hard one way or the other on how the Act falls today because ultimately the numbers are there and stacked in your favour on your side. Unless of course all of us were here today and either a few of you were asleep or travelling cause the majority of that are slim now; but the fact is [laughter] the fact is Mr. Speaker that, that got the attention of the Prime Minister he got awake one time like Joshua of old, like Joshua of old...

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: You dreaming eh....

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: ... [Laughter] the fact Mr. Speaker, the fact, Mr. Speaker is that we have gone some lengths to make distinctions between banking and non-banking institutions and the member for West St. George is an old insurance man in himself but today both sets of agencies are crossing over...

HONOURABLE CECIL MCKIE: Not old, experienced...

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: ... Experience, experience thanks, experiences member for West St. George...

HONOURABLE CECIL MCKIE: Old and experienced [laughter]

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: ... [Laughter] old and experienced that is if you do business today, you would find a lot of banks want to provide to you straight up, all the insurances services that you would normally have to go out and shop for. Even when you do a deal with an agency to buy a motor car they almost want to have a turn key operations tell you everything about lock, stock and barrel, you buy the car they can sell you insurance, they do everything; and equally some credit unions are navigating there way to be banks of sorts, they want to provide mostly all... all of the services the banks provide. So increasing the lines are being blurred, I think for example its no secret, credit unions for example have tried to show up themselves now by issuance themselves by what they called Permanent Shares so that there is a stronger equity based that everybody do not just have a rush on the credit unions and say *gimme* back me money what I have and suddenly find the money *nah dey* as you say in local terms. So they say you know what happen we want to keep a fair portion, quit apart from whatever statutory provision that may be in place to keep minimum amounts of monies to attend to the

members; but I say that to say that the lines are narrowing so let us not make this debate on this distinction so sharp that we feel the dichotomies are irreversible or inseparable or so wide apart.

So Mr. Speaker, I have sympathies for the debate on our side which finds, lessons and the whole ad dives less walk or less creep that is it; before we walk and walk before we run, because there is nothing in our pores to prevent us going to the next step but its everything to lose if we going to the other way and stumble and falter very badly and a lot of people got burnt or hurt because we have overburdened ourselves without the machinery; because I do not know and maybe when the Honourable Prime Minister rebuts he may refresh and remind us what it cost now to run the Offshore Finance Authority, but these are high salaried institutions and with significant staff of professionals and I will imagine it cost a pretty penny to run the Offshore Finance Authority and it will be even more so to run the Financial Services Authority and I do not know if that is the contribution for my colleague from West Kingstown would make but the question of how it is financed is always a question that we have to bear in mind because we may or may not impose a fee on the agencies to which we are serving.

So the question, Mr. Speaker, is like the proverbial chicken and egg, which comes first, whether a perfect Financial Services Authority will guarantee the best of regulations or whether we take the step by step approach and get it right. Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, and again this is the Prime Minister's own argument the risk taker as he identifies himself to be he is quite prepared to play...to put all the eggs in one basket and to function under one big umbrella, let us bite the bullet that is what he says, let us go with it take the ball and run... well it is a defensible argument, it is a defensible argument in that regard I have a little disagreement for the Honourable Sobato Caesar, Minister for...Member for South Central Windward because I do not agree with him that the hardest part of this exercise in the building block that is setting up the agencies, I think that is not near as challenging as it is as functionally managing the thing on a day to day basis after it is up and running eh? That's my whole feeling, the challenge comes later when you are up and running when all of the managerial challenges we would normally expect of businesses would begin to manifest themselves that's when the biggest challenge. Not least of which is always the proverbial question of political interference in state run organisations because we have to be mindful of that potential and that possibility.

Mr. Speaker, there is one area in which I did not hear addressed today and it is perhaps because it is...I do not normally like to uhm...or maybe I should just back away from it and not expose any deficiency on my own part because clearly there is regulation in this regard but you know right here in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Mr. Speaker, you could go into Scotia Bank but I am aware of it banks portfolio are a little bit better than some others I suspect it might be so for FCIB, maybe so for RBBT let me not be so discriminating and perhaps our own Bank of St. Vincent maybe getting there, but you could go in there and virtually do all of the...make all of the investment decisions you would make if you were in Canada or somewhere else, all of the different stock market opportunity and baskets of investments opportunities and sometime people do not know they feel they could walk into a bank and is only a matter of fixed deposits, but it is way beyond that and I was only raising that in the context in that we still yet do not have active stock market in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines I know there is an OECS stock market, but in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines are still yet not at that level of operating and functioning through a stock market, in fact we still do not have public trading company to the best of my knowledge you know and uhm it is something we probably feel that is taking of I believe by the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank, I do not know, or what is the agency, it may well be so but that

is something I just pondered upon. We also do not have a burn market either, but the Member for East Kingstown did draw to our attention that our financial architecture is still emerging and evolving and I suppose in the passage of time all of these can be brought under the ambit of one or the other authority as they evolve. So this is... these are matters for us to reflect on, Mr. Speaker, as we deepened our financial architecture and that we are reminded that at the end of the day while we talk about St. Vincent, Grenada and St. Lucia we are really now at the point where are one single financial space and so what obtains in the OECS in general is as of equal importance to what we do in the Unit Member State and so I imagine as well that whatever we are doing here we are not being unmindful of what our other OECS member states are also doing because they are obviously be a benefit than if we had a harmonised legislation addressing what is pretty much a common interest matter...financial matter. So Mr. Speaker, my conclusion would be to go on the side of wisdom and experience as it had been a little more tried and tested and regional in its orientation, that means, Mr. Speaker, I come down on the side of the proposal of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, Member for East Kingstown. Let us consolidate the work of the Offshore Financial Authority, place the other new credit union building societies and others under the new Financial Services Authority watch it grow for a reasonable time period, what is reasonable is debatable, five years, seven years, ten years and then as we have cut our teeth and perfect the sciences we say look we are ready for the next step. Much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for West Kingstown.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I would want to make a brief contribution to the discussion on a Bill whose importance to us requires no argumentation and I would like to merely reinforce and agree with the comments raised by my colleagues on this side of the Honourable House beginning with the Leader of the Opposition and my colleague Major Leacock.

Mr. Speaker I wish to restrict my observations to matters of administration of the proposed entity, with particular reference to the financing of the unit. I listened with interest to the comment made by the Honourable Member Sobato Caesar about the benefits of bringing everything together and I suggested then that normally that should bring improvements but I wish to bring to bare my own experience as an administrator and lessons I have learnt not just from here in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines but in other parts of the world.

Mr. Speaker, the new entity that is being proposed bears no resemblances quiet frankly to the Financial...the Offshore and the other like institutions that currently exist. When one wants to have a conglomerate an amalgamation of all these different entities, it is my humble suggestion that you need to build on an existing institution with a sufficiency of core competencies and proven track record that can easily be expanded and it is for that reason why I am absolute agreement with the recommendation of the Leader of the Opposition that you look at existing institutions now and see how you can slightly add to them, create something else and possibly with time you can look down the road at merging these institutions but the timing of this exercise is critical to its success. I look, Mr. Speaker, on the clause relating to the Executive Director, the Staff and the appointment of experts etc, etc... and I find amusing quite honestly, it is interesting, intriguing but still amusing, you see It speaks of very vaguely mind you of the organisational structure that is really a serious entity, it speaks only of the appointment of the Chief Operating Officer and such other staff, but it goes on to talk about appointment of experts and so forth and so forth.

Mr. Speaker, any entity that has to take on this wide array of function and does not have a quality institutional capability of its own cannot effectively utilize experts, they will be a runaway train, you need to have on board people who can pull it together and make it work, you need to look seriously at the kinds of staff that you would need, for example to ensure that the very financing of the institutions, that in itself is well looked at. That the Human Resource Management component has to be strength...you have people of proven expertise to assist in the recruitment, training and retention of the quality people you need to run this institution, and then I look, Mr. Speaker, to a section which I found very amazingly, the Leader of Government business bypass, literally rolled over it the financing of these institutions. He...his silence on it was deafening to me and I believe Mr. Speaker that herein lays one of the death knell of his proposal and am very blunt on this. My understanding of regulatory institutions of which this one is an example, it is not uncommon for such an institution to require those entities being regulated to make a contribution to the functioning...financial contribution to the functioning of the entity and I believe we need to look at the creative mechanisms for ensuring that this entity has adequate finance and... this is a critical and...and does not have to rely on Central Government for funding.

Mr. Speaker, when we in this house debating the formation of BRAGSA I was at pains to point out that if you set up BRAGSA and make it like another branch of the Ministry where it is totally dependant on the Central Government for funding it will not work. What you have today? What you have today? BRAGSA has competent staff but it has no control over the flow of funds which would help it to be more efficient and effective in the execution of its mandate, that is the problem with BRAGSA; funding. Similarly this entity has got to have a lot of staff, a lot of quality staff, it's got to be involved in a lot of work and must not have problems of finding resources to enable it to function effectively. I believe that there in discussion...I believe that financial institutions like the banks...again I am not in anyway a person of financial expertise but the Central Bank must get a source of funds from the banks that it regulates, must, must otherwise it would not be able to function.

Therefore, why is it not part of this proposal that those non-banking institutions and whatever be required to make in discussion with them a financial contributions of whatever agreement to the sustainability and effectiveness because, Mr. Speaker, I say this in all honesty because an affective regulatory institution is of tremendous benefit to the institution they regulating, if they do their work properly, they would require these institutions to be up to speed and they would not allow them to be runaway trains and so forth, which is in their inherent interest and the interest of the people whose money they manage. So I believe when I look at the section on part four (4) under Financial Provision relating to the authority I see such sums as may be voted by Parliament and I started to cringe. Government doesn't have money to do most things already and its not going to get better down the road. Money borrowed by the authority, you gotta be paying it back, revenues from charges imposed by the authority for use of any facility or services and that one I am not sure that is ok but I am not sure that is what I am talking...that is not at all what I am talking about as necessary as that is amounts realised from investments and so the obvious things and money received and grants et cetera. You see, Mr. Speaker, the provision of adequate funding is germane to the recruitment, training and retention of competent quality staff to enable this institution to do its work effectively and even with that, if that is done, Mr. Speaker, when I look at the proposals with respect to administration I quiver because it seems to be glossing over what I honestly believe is one of the most critical component. If you go back to some of the statutory bodies in this country, the legislation in setting it up speaks to the appointment of the CEO and it goes to speak of the recruitment of specific technical staff. An institution of this kind would require some of the finest legal brains,

financial brains, economist and people with business acumen. It would require an array of very competent people who do not work for pennies and to be able to recruit them and retain them you have got to create the culture that would convince them that they are getting into something that is sustainable and I honestly worry about the organisational structure that is proposed...well the brevity of this component and that is why again I humbly agree with the recommendation of my leader that with an adjustment I say, while I agree that it is good ultimately to have all these things under one umbrella and it requires no argumentation about the benefits of such actions but in starting up in the manner proposed here there will be total chaos its not going to be effective, its not likely to work. We should start with a small something to be expanded with the aim can set a timeframe for it of ultimately when we have learnt and we have built some of the in house capability moving all the way towards this noble objective. Again Mr. Speaker, all of us agree, all of us agree without reservation that the concept is beautiful but the devil is in the details. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Further debate, Honourable Prime Minister.

DR. HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank all Honourable members for there contribution and I want to thank the draft persons in the Office of the Attorney General...the Honourable Attorney General for their important contribution. I had earlier in my remarks on the second...the debating originally on the second reading I gave my words of appreciations and thanks to other categories of persons.

Mr. Speaker, in each of the independent countries of the OECS, other than Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, there is already a single regulatory unit in Financial Services Authority, and to the extent that the cautioned had been expressed by me about everything under the same umbrella, I think the experiences in those countries, plus the persuasiveness of other advisors point to the fact that this is a workable model. I do not think we should be unduly worried about it because we have had it working elsewhere with countries at a similar stage of development as we are.

Mr. Speaker, I can make the case wildly for the single body as distinct for having it...uhm truncated IFSA alone and the rest of the Non-Financial Institutions in another body. I can make it by reference to other advanced countries but I would not do that. In all the countries that I have researched in the subject and it is a matter on which I believe that a little reading, a little research would perhaps help in the elucidation of the only contentious issue which is really before us, well I wouldn't say contentious, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition had a reservation and a caution, the Honourable Member for West Kingstown as his wont went off and predicts chaos and I think there is two different judgmental positions.

Mr. Speaker, I would address a number of comments which have been made in an umbrella fashion. The statues which put a framework for an authority or a corporation do not put out an organisational chart; you name the principal officer, you name the board, you set out the broad parameters for those two sets of offices and then you put your organisational chart in place. Indeed Mr. Speaker that is the situation with IFSA, if anyone looks at the International Financial Services Authority Act and IFSA has worked quite well in its regulatory capacity. It is the same thing, the Executive Director is defined and the Board and all the respective qualifications and you flesh out the administrative frame. In the case of the Single Regulatory Authority which body has been advised to be set up by CARTAC provided for us actually an organisational chart, a structure is a whole document on it.

We do not need to detail that in the law, it is not necessary and what they have provided we considered it to be a good structure and we would do some adaptations.

Mr. Speaker, what will happen is this and in this regard I speak specifically to the Leader of the Opposition because it is very difficult to deal with all the amounts of incendiary remarks from other sources. There would be divisions, or units, or departments within the Single Regulatory Authority, for instance there would be someone heading the International Financial Services Authority, I mean...someone the division for the International Financial Services maybe someone else for instance to head the Insurance Regulatory Arm and so on and so forth. At the moment, we have sixteen persons employed in the International Financial Services Authority, for the insurance in the Ministry of Finance is three or four persons in that division. We have structures already which we will move into this larger and the elements of the pre-existing structures would be brought together in a manner which provides an organic whole in where the whole is more than a summation in the individual parts.

I want to say further, Mr. Speaker, there is a misconception in some quarters about the financing of a regulatory authority if one reads, if one pauses and reads about regulatory authority rather than speak about them without knowledge, one would come from a general proposition that the authority must pay for itself, finance itself, do not go to the government. In fact those who are experience of regulations over dozens of years, decades, specifically advise and the International regulations insist, that the Regulatory Authority does not itself charge monies and collect the monies itself where it confuses the collection of monies from entities it is to regulate with the overall... overriding function of regulation and that is why in the case of the International Financial Services Authority the government provides a subvention annually in the estimates and it is there anybody can read it who is in the house of 1.5 million dollars and all monies to be paid to IFSA for any work done by IFSA they are paid through the consolidated fund. Indeed, IFSA by the end of September has gone past the mark of \$3.2 million it is doing better this year than it has done last year but those monies come to the consolidated fund not for IFSA itself to be using as it sees and thinks fit. It presents a budget, it present a business plan for its work in the same way it will be done for the Single Regulatory Authority and the Government will make a subvention to the Single Regulatory Authority and all monies collected for the work of the Single regulatory Authority does not go into the coffers of the Single Regulatory Authority to be managed by it. The Single Regulatory Authority is not like the Water Authority with great respect, it is not like such institutions, it is of a different character and please let us have a little humility and learn about it, read about it before we go off making ill informed comments.

Mr. Speaker, the restrained submission by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition is one which I understand and I am seeking to allay his fears in terms of the departmental structure of this authority and what has happened in other jurisdictions, for persons embracing doom and gloom with everything I really can't talk to that because that's outside the ball park, completely outside the ball park and my skills... my skill sets are not attuned to coping with that kind of comment which is not really proper and germane, and Mr. Speaker, if I may just say this in response to a specific comment which was made by an Honourable Member on the other side, I passed over quickly the issue of financing...I specifically pointed out that part four addresses finance, we went through in the Select Committee every single item in respect of the financing, this matter which went through the Select Committee it doesn't fall upon me to go through every provision that is why, Mr. Speaker, I gave just a summary of the parts and various provisions. So let us not set up... we have so many problems in

this world we are seeking to set up straw men and just to make debating points...I mean really...I mean children so those sorts of things not grown people, you know its debating speaking competitions and what the call it...the Schools Public Speaking Competitions or something of that which is high level for the purpose which is within the parameters but not for debating this in this Honourable House.

Mr. Speaker, I am satisfied having studied this matter for a long time, having interfaced with the experts, having myself dealt with regulatory authorities for over twenty years as a lawyer, practicing in this and other jurisdictions in the Caribbean, having been now the Minister of Finance for eleven years and of course before these last thirty-one years I have a history of doing research and with that history has stayed with me I would not come to this Honourable House to advise on a matter which I am not satisfied has a reasonable basis. The draft for this Bill was in fact done [by] a regional expert and it went through the grinder, through the Honourable Attorney General Chambers, through IFSA and I would want to tell you through the Prime Minister himself, using his legal skills, which I believe that it is acknowledge I have a fair amount of that after many years of study and practice in the field and I come with everything to this Honourable House and in the Bill which is presented and taken in account of the one central caution which the Honourable Leader of the Opposition has raised restrained fashion and I think I have answered it, I do not know whether I have convinced him but I believe that I have done it in a manner to convince this Honourable House that this Bill ought to pass, to do it another way is my judgment, among other things to signal to the regional and international community that we are proceeding to the issue of regulation in a half hearted manner. That we are not as committed as we ought to be, it is true that regional and international agencies do not really rule us or tell us or determine for us to do, we are an independent and sovereign country but that doesn't mean that we must not listen to advice and where that advice is sensible and where the experience is one of which you are to take heed you listen to the advice and you embrace the experience and call it your own and incorporate it into your own domestic circumstances; and this is what we have done in this case. Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, the Bill having gone thorough the Select Committee there is no need for it to go through a Committee of the whole House.

I beg to move that the Bill for an Act to establish the Financial Services Authority to regulate certain entities and businesses in the financial sector and to provide for related matters be passed a third time by title.

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

**Question put and agreed to.
Bill read a third time by title and passed.**

INSURANCE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2011

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

I beg to move that the Bill for an Act to amend the Insurance Act, Chapter 306 of the Laws of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. This Bill seeks to amend the Insurance Act, Chapter 306 of the Laws of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, it say 209 but it is not 209, Mr. Speaker, it is the Revised Edition...yes the Revised Edition 209. I beg that it be read...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Just a minute, we have 2009...its 209?

DR. HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: ...its 2009-307-2009

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay

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

**Question put and agreed to.
Bill read a first time.**

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Prime Minister.

DR. HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move under Standing Order 48 that this Bill be taken through all its stages at today's sitting.

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

Question put and agreed to.

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

I beg to move that the Bill for an Act to amend the Insurance Act, Chapter 306 of the Laws of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Revised Edition 209 be read a second time.

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

**Question put and agreed to.
Bill read a second time.**

DR. HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I do not believe we are going to have controversy on this Bill because I noted the comments of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition when he was making the presentation on the matter we have just concluded being emphatic in the support of this particular Bill, this one which is before us.

Mr. Speaker, I may say this, that this Bill originated from the bowels of the Office of the Prime Minister, the fine-tuning of it is done in the office of the Honourable Attorney General. Mr. Speaker, laws when passed teach us through experience, it was my privilege to pilot the Insurance Act in 2003, to head the Select Committee where we had very extensive discussions with persons in the insurance industry and professionals.

Mr. Speaker, this Act has served us well and it is a good law, but even a good law can be improved upon and you have to look at the practical world and have appropriate legislation to take care not only of extenuating circumstances but that which is reasonable, foreseeable. This Act...this amendment addresses the strengthening

of Section 32 of the Insurance Act and it is important for us to read what Section 32 says and I just want to make this point that this amendment which we have before us...this Bill before us is a practical measure of strengthening the Act. Section 32 says in the parent Act:

- 1. A trustee may not deal with any assets held in trust by him without the prior general or specific approval of the Supervisor...**

(That's the Supervisor for Insurance, the Regulatory Authority. Sub clause...subsection 2 sorry)

- 2. A trustee shall as required by the supervisor submit a list of the assets held in trust pursuant to Section 31...**

(And I will come to Section 31 in a minute and 32; subsection 3 says:

- 3. A trustee who convenes subsection 1 shall be under the same liability as if the appropriate policy holder had been the beneficiary of the trust.**

(Very clear and very straight forward, particularly when read in light of Section 31 about creating a trust. Subsection 1 of 32 says:

- 1. A trust referred to in Section 29 (2) shall be created by trust deed, the contents, the trustees of which shall be approved by the Supervisor before the trust is created;**
- 2. The Supervisor may for the purpose of this section allow the assets required to be placed in trust to be held by a bank in the state...**

(Notice this...)

The Supervisor may for the purpose of this section allow the assets required to be placed in trust to be held by a bank in the state or financial institution approved by the Supervisor to the order of or on behalf of the Supervisor and the assets shall be deemed to be placed in trust and the bank or financial institution shall be deemed to a trustee.

So the Supervisor says that bank X, you want to be the trustee of the assets in relation to the insurance company? The Supervisor says yes, you are the trustee. They gave a list of assets of which you are the trustee, because why is this important. There is a statutory fund to be held by the Supervisor of Insurance which by this very law, the Supervisor...the insurance company is obliged to put this...these monies in this statutory fund. I am not talking about the deposit which is made for the registration of the insurance company, that's a separate matter and the law makes it plain that these funds in the statutory...these assets in the statutory fund for insurance A,B or X, you can have a bank or other financial institutions here in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines say listen I am holding the following assets, this is the list A,B,C,D,E,F,G, or you put it in numerals 1,2,3,4,5,6. These are the assets which the insurance company is asking me to hold in trust for the insurance company; the Supervisor says that's fine. Now, if I do so a relationship is clearly established, a relationship of trust that's what it is. So it is expected that if the bank...if a bank provides a list it is...it follows that the Supervisor would say yes, we have funds in the statutory, we have assets in the statutory fund because here they are and a reputable bank is the trustee, that's what the law is saying.

Now, the trustee, that is to say the bank or the financial institution which is holding these funds can't be heard to say if anything were to go wrong that I really do not hold them or to put itself the position of derogation or diminution from the trust itself. So what we are doing to strengthen it; those provisions remain but we are saying the following, we are adding the following new subsections and the time may well come, I do not know, the time may well come when I am finished reading these and if we pass it here we may be singly or collectively heralded by policy holders in this country, I do not know if they would build a statue. Eh? [Laugh] but we say here section 32 is amended:

a. By inserting immediately after subsection 2 the following new subsections

Remember this section 33 has 3 subsections, subsection 1, 32 has 3 subsections, subsection 1 that a trustee must not deal with the assets entrusted by him without the prior or general approval of the Supervisor.

Subsection 2 says: a trustee shall be required by the Supervisor to submit a list of assets held in the trust pursuant to subsection... to Section 31.

So those are the two provisions which this now is following and what does it say 32

- a. Where pursuant to subsection 2 a list of assets has been submitted to the Supervisor and thereafter it is discovered that the value of the assets in the list no longer represents the total sum stated in the said list, then in any proceedings in any court of law or other judicial or quasi judicial body it shall be conclusively presumed that the trustee has dealt with the assets without the prior, general or specific approval of the Supervisor or without an express written approval given by the Supervisor to dispose or deal with the assets.**

(Just in case there is any doubt it is made pellucid, some in order to add to that clarity may say it is pellucidly clear but once it is pellucid it is clear so they can't double it up and say it is pellucidly clear, it is pellucid.)

- b. Where a trustee has or is deemed to have dealt with assets without the prior, general or specific approval of the Supervisor or without an express written approval as referred to in subsection 2 (a) and there is a deficiency in the total value of the assets as contained in the list submitted pursuant to subsection 2; The Supervisor shall in writing within a time to be specified by him direct the trustee to make good the deficiency.**

So the first amendment (a) says listen do not fool around with these assets eh, if there is a diminution in value smh! If the assets the total there and you tell them say afterwards you do not have it. No, no, no you can't be allowed to do that.

2 (b) is saying if anything like that is happening the Supervisor, the regulator for the insurance companies would say make good the deficiency. Well now what would happen the insurance company...the trustee may play bad and say I am making good the deficiency why you want me make good the deficiency and this is where you have a little sting in the tail.

- c. A trustee who fails to comply with the directions given to him by the Supervisor to make good the deficiency within the periods stated shall be liable to pay a penalty of \$500,000.00 for every day or part thereof during which the failure continues.**

Now we dealing with millions of dollars you know, millions and millions of dollars in insurance company.

So they say well charge your money let me see how you going to get it, (d) takes care of that.

- d. The penalty imposed under subsection 2(c) shall constitute a charge in favour of the Supervisor upon all the property of the trustee and may be sued...**

(And that is to say the trustee)

...may be sued for and recovered in the court by the Supervisor or the Honourable Attorney General.

You notice how it is practical 1,2,3,4 smh! But you then have to...you can't be completely unreasonable because just incase somebody goes at the trustee...just in case somebody goes at the trustee but the trustee complies with the instructions and the requirements and the request of the Supervisor you can't put them in that kind of double penalty, you can't have something that is confiscatory, so that is why (d) comes in...no sorry that is why...that is why (b) cause the first one is 2(a), 2(b) , 2(c), 2(d) and now this (b) in subsection 3, because subsection 3 here says:

- b. A trustee who contravenes subsection 1 shall be under the same liability as if the appropriate policy holder had been the beneficiary of the trust;**

We put a proviso to that which says

Provided that where a trustee has complied with the directions given to him by the Supervisor under subsection 2(b) then the trustee shall have no liability under this subsection towards the appropriate policy holder;

But that is if they comply, if they do not comply the appropriate policy holder can go at you, the trustee. I do not think can have a more practical piece of law to strengthened it, I think that this takes care of the policy holders interest and I would be hopeful that this law would be passed here this evening with the unanimous support of this Honourable House. I am obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Leader of the Opposition

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Mr. Speaker, I had already given an indication that I was in support of this piece of legislation. I believe it is very important that there be provision in the law to provide for any deficiency that may arise for whatever of reason. Our own experience recently with CLICO tells me that if this was in place this situation would have been somewhat different with British American, somewhat different than it is today in terms of our ability to provide some reparation to those persons who have lost their money. I am making the assumption that this is not retroactive. Much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

DR. HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, I am very grateful to the support the Honourable Leader of the Opposition. I thought you would be very pleased if it has retroactive application... [Laughter] and he cannot say that and neither can I say that. We...what I know is that this law when passed is of great relevance, I can't assume what the Supervisor of Insurance would do. The Supervisor of Insurance may well take advantage of this provision to make request and seek for the trustee to make good deficiency, so it is a

piece of legislation I would simply say without more that it strengthens the provisions of this law which is basically a good law but puts it in a much better position for the purpose of the recovery of any deficiency.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Honourable House resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House to consider this Bill clause by clause.

**Question put and agreed to
House resolved into a Committee to consider Bill clause by clause.
House Resumed.**

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I have the honour to report that the Bill for an Act to amend the Insurance Act, chapter 306 of the Laws of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Revised Edition 209 has passed the committee stage with minor amendment.

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

I beg to move that a Bill for an Act to amend the Insurance Act, Chapter 306 of the Laws of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Revised Edition 2009 be read by title and passed.

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

**Question put and agreed to.
Bill read a third time by title and passed.**

RESOLUTION

DESIGNATING THE YEAR OF 2012 AS THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF COOPERATIVES

DR. HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, may I just indicate, we are hoping to just have this read and voted upon it is in the name of the Honourable Minister of Cooperatives. The...I have spoken to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition this was asked of us by the credit unions movement in the country, to the Parliament to record its support, I do not think there is an issue on which there is any debate at all and so would simply have it read and the...without any debate and the motion put, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member

HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members.

I beg to move Resolution designating the year 2012 as the International year of Cooperatives.

HONOURABLE ELVIS CHARLES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay uhm...it has been seconded, let me see. Ok I would want you to read the Resolution so that we can...having been moved and seconded, kindly read the Resolution.

HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON: WHEREAS in St. Vincent and the Grenadines there are eighteen (18) active cooperatives with 60,000 members; and

AND WHEREAS co-operatives in St. Vincent and the Grenadines generate business approximating 60% of the total national employment and make a substantial contribution to the economy of St. Vincent and the Grenadines with assets in excess of EC\$305 million; and

AND WHEREAS for the past 200 years co-operatives, credit unions, mutuals and other forms of social business have strengthened and sustained local and national economies; and

AND WHEREAS cooperatives are a major economic force in developed countries and a powerful business model in developing countries, protecting 100 million jobs and the livelihoods of a billion members worldwide; and

AND WHEREAS the economic activity of the largest 300 cooperatives in the world is equal to that of the 10th largest national economy; and

AND WHEREAS United Nations Resolution 64/136 adopted by the General Assembly on December 18, 2009, designates the year **2012** as the “**International Year of Cooperatives**”; and

AND WHEREAS the theme of the International Year of Cooperatives is “**Cooperatives Enterprise Build a Better World**”; and

AND WHEREAS cooperatives are the businesses of the people and for more than a century have been a vital part of the world economy; **NOW THEREFORE:**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines:

1. **DESIGNATE** the year **2012** as the “**International Year of Cooperatives**”;
2. **CONGRATULATE** cooperatives and members of cooperatives in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and around the world on the United Nations’ recognition of 2012 as the “International Year of Cooperatives” ;
3. **RECOGNISE** the vital role properly-regulated cooperatives play in the economic and social well being of St. Vincent and the Grenadines;
4. **SUPPORT** the establishment of a National Committee for the 2012 International Year of Cooperatives to be comprised of representatives from each relevant Government agency, all co-operatives sectors, and other major stakeholders;
5. **RECOGNISE** the importance of facilitating a favourable climate for cooperative development, raising the profile of cooperatives and demonstrating the manner by which cooperatives build local wealth, generate employment and provide competition in the market place; and
6. **ENCOURAGE** highlighting the positive impact of cooperatives and developing new programs for domestic and international cooperative development.

Mr. Speaker, I also have here the plan of action to be lead in this House for the International Year of Cooperatives, am much obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the Resolution having been read, moved and seconded and fully read and the operative part of the Resolution as you would have notice.

**Question put and agreed to.
Operative Part of the Resolution Adopted**

SUSPENSION

DR. HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, the other...the two other important matters on the Order Paper, one of them is a Bill addressing Information Exchange to give effect to the Twenty TEIA's, the Tax Exchange Information Agreements, TEIA's but I have been advised that several Honourable Members have not been able to study carefully the Bill because it was circulated maybe Thursday or Friday, in the regard, Mr. Speaker, given its importance I think it is fair enough for Honourable Members to have another couple days to read it and study it properly; and then of course there is the Cocoa Resolution, if we come back on Friday, Mr. Speaker, we should be able to get through by one o'clock with both of them because...

So accordingly I beg to move that this Honourable House do stand suspended until Friday 25th, November at 10 a.m.

**Question put and agreed to.
House suspended at 6:55 p.m.**