

**No. 3**

**Tuesday**

**First Session**

**5<sup>th</sup> April, 2011**

**Ninth Parliament**

**SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES**

**THE**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

**(HANSARD)**

**ADVANCE COPY**

**OFFICIAL REPORT**

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**THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

**OFFICIAL REPORT**

**PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE THIRD 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.**

**NINTH SITTING**

**5<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 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 Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade  
And Consumer Affairs  
Honourable Dr. Douglas Slater

Government Senator

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

Government Senator

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

Government Senator

Honourable David Browne

Government Senator/ Deputy Speaker

## **ABSENT**

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

# ST VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY 5 APRIL, 2010

### PRAYER

The Honourable Speaker reads the Prayer to commence the sitting of the House.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Prime Minister.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, may I crave your indulgence as leader of the House first to indicate that today, and particularly to members of the public for them to understand that today the business known as Private Members' business has priority until 5:00 p.m. in accordance with the Rules; which means that persons who are not members of cabinet and those numbers include two on this side of the House. That is to say the Honourable Senators Browne and Charles; even though the Honourable Senator Charles is a Parliamentary Secretary, he is not a member of the Cabinet and therefore he is a Private Member. And those who are on the opposition side are of course Private Members, and they are at liberty to bring motions or Bills so long as the Motion or Bills do not involve any expenditure of government monies; unless there had been a signification by the Governor General to a Minister. I should point out that the Constitutional Amendments; the new Constitution which was proposed had a provision that Private Members could have brought ...; (had that constitution passed) would have been able to bring Motions and Bills involving the expenditure of money; but as we all know that constitution was defeated.

So, under the law, the Constitution and the Rules of the House currently is that Private Members on the third meeting of the New Year debates for the Estimates and Budget are being constituted as one meeting, even though they are held over several days. And I noted that there are two Private Members' motions on the Order Paper in the names of the Honourable Senators Browne and Charles, so I just wish to indicate that for Honourable Members. And at the appropriate point, Mr. Speaker, I will move the relevant motion in respect of time.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** And Honourable Prime Minister, I suggest that since we are in the information age and since many persons are following, because I understand that many persons now have copies of the Rules of the House that you are referring specifically to section 22(2) in the Rules and Order, in relation to the explanation that you have just given. All right, thanks.

### OBITUARIES

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Prime Minister.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, I have been advised that there are many obituaries today so I shall be very short simply to acknowledge the passing of Sir Fred Phillips, a Vincentian born who rose to be the Governor General of St Kitts and Nevis: in fact the first native Caribbean person to assume that position

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Just a minute, Honourable Prime Minister. [Addressing API technicians] I have just been informed that there is no sound on television, I do not know if you want to check that for me please, and confirm whether it is so. It is all right now? Okay, he says it is all right now.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, to acknowledge the passing of a son of the soil, Sir Fred Phillips, who had risen to the office of the first native Caribbean Governor, of St Kitts and Nevis. Mr. Speaker, many persons do not also know that Sir Fred was the Cabinet Secretary to Sir Grantley Adams, the first Prime Minister of what is now the defunct Federation, the Federation which lasted just about two years: the Federation of the West Indies. A very experienced constitutional lawyer, he has several books and constitutional law to his credit and for those younger ones who may wish to find out about him he wrote a wonderful autobiography. There is much more which could be said about him, Mr. Speaker, but I want to acknowledge the passing of this great Vincentian who was a very humble human being and I extend to his family and friends our respect and condolences.

Mr. Speaker, I would like also to acknowledge the passing of Sir Allan Louisy former High Court Judge, former Prime Minister of St Lucia who died recently. Sir Allan also is a renowned regionalist. We were represented at the State funeral, the Government and people of St Vincent and the Grenadines. Again, I convey to his bereaved family and friends and to the people of St Lucia our profound respect and condolences.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Member for South Windward.

**HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON:** Honourable Members, I rise to offer condolences on the passing of Mr. Irving Carr formerly of JG Agencies; as a businessman he sponsored the Secondary School Football Tournament for more than 22 years; a good man. I also like to pay tribute to reverend Reninson Howell, Catholic Priest from St Vincent and the Grenadines who passed away a few weeks ago. Also Natalie Ollivierre from Cedars, the daughter of Freddie Ollivierre, she just opened a new business at Peruvian Vale. She passed away last week as well; an old Labour Party stalwart in the person of Vera Sutton from Stubbs, who was laid to rest two Saturdays ago; may their souls rest in peace.

**HONOURABLE MR SPEAKER:** Just a minute please. I am still informed that there is still no sound on ... hello!

**API TECHNICIAN RESPONSE:** [Inaudible] there is a problem with the server.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Okay, okay all right. Member for Central [Interjection] hello! I did not get that [inaudible response] [Laughs]

**HONOURABLE MAXWELL CHARLES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to express condolences to some families in Central Leeward for those whom we have lost over the past few weeks. Mr. Fred Antoine former worker of the CWSA, also Miss Joyce Patterson of Layou; of course, Fred Antoine is from Layou; also Miss Earlene Welcome and Bernice Jackson also of Layou. From Barrouallie we have passing also Miss Priscilla Campbell a distinguished teacher. I first knew Ms. Campbell when I went to Barrouallie to teach in the year 1977, she was a very good worker, devoted worker, and we will all miss her although she was retired not too long ago prior to her passing. Also, I call him affectionately Bro. Wayne the brother of Dunstan Johnson, I learnt also of Miss Martha Francis of Layou and Mr. Lionel Jessop of Buccament Bay and finally Mr. Fitzgerald Da Silva, the son of Patrick Da Silva who passed away in North America. Again, I offered my condolences. He would be buried today on the Windward side of the Island, Colonarie. That is all Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** All right Member for East St George.

**HONOURABLE CLAYTON BURGIN:** Mr. Speaker, I also would wish to extend deepest condolences to the family of Mr. Irving Carr, he being a constituent of mine and as was stated he was a generous businessman. He did not only sponsor the football competition as was stated by Minister Stephenson but he would have been making contributions to all other organisations, and I can testify to that. Be it church, community group and other sporting bodies, so, we would miss him. As a business person he made his contributions to St Vincent and the Grenadines but I want to once again extend condolences to the family and may his soul rest in peace. And also to the Lucas family in Belmont who lost their dad recently, he was buried last Saturday. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** All right.

### **CONGRATULATORY REMARKS**

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Member for South Windward.

**HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to offer congratulations to the 2010 National Sports Council Awardees and I name them:-

Junior female of the year in track and field	Nadia Delpesche
Junior male in football	Myron Samuels
Senior female track and field	Natasha Meyers
Senior male cricket	Delrun Johnson
Coach of the year track and field	Godfrey Harry
Sport Journalist of the year of the Search Light Newspaper	Rohan Thomas
Association of the year	Squash Association
Groundsman of the year	Branford Medford

Sports personality and International  
Athlete of the year

Natasha Mayers

I would also like to congratulate the Inter Secondary School Sports Championship Meets and to pay tribute to our outstanding athletes in that beautiful tournament that was held last week.

Junior female champion  
Campden Park Secondary School

Laneisha Oliver

Junior male champion of the Union  
Island Secondary School

Dominic Pierre

And if I may say, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, this is the first year that the Union Island Secondary School has participated fully in the Inter Secondary Schools Sports Championship. [Applause] They came up two days before for the heats and they participated fully in the tournament, the actual tournament and they were very outstanding. We must congratulate the Union Island Secondary School.

Intermediate female of the Thomas  
Saunders Secondary

Nicky Ann Stephens

Intermediate male champion  
of the Thomas Saunders Secondary

Renaldo Charles

Senior female of the Petit Bordel Secondary

Shanelle McKie

Senior male of the Petit Bordel Secondary

Yurnic Nanton

Most outstanding male of the Thomas  
Saunders Secondary

Renaldo Charles

Most outstanding female (tie between)

Shanelle McKie  
Lenisha Oliver

In the overall championships first, second and third respectively:-

Boys Champion

Thomas Saunders Secondary

[Applause]

Petit Bordel Secondary  
St Vincent Grammar  
St Martin Secondary

Girls' championship overall winners:

First [Applause]	Thomas Saunders Secondary
Second	Campden Park Secondary
Third	St Joseph Convent Kingstown
Fourth	Petit Bordel Secondary

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I also would like this morning, to congratulate Mr. Christopher Adams from Union Island, he being the first Resident Sports Officer for the Grenadines, something that we must be very proud of [Applause]. I also want to congratulate the Squash Association in winning the Junior Squash Championship this year. They participated in the tournament and they won four gold medals, six silver medals and the championship for Squash in the region. Much obliged, Mr. Speaker. [Applause] [Knocking on the desk]

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Prime Minister.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker may I in the absence of the Honourable Member for the Southern Grenadines congratulate the team of athletes from the Union Island Secondary School, the secondary school games to which the Honourable Minister of Sports just referred and gave a full breakdown of the awards and the champions. It is the first time I have been advised that the Union Island Secondary School sent a full complement of athletes to the secondary school games. [Applause] These games have been in existence for the entire duration of period that the Union Island Secondary School has been functioning. In fact, I think that school was built by the Cato administration in 1975 and Mr. Speaker, very often Union Island would not turn up for the heats because you had to come on two separate days for the heats; and they never send the full complement on the day of the sports.

And when they came because they did not participate in the heats they were assigned the most difficult lane, which is the outside lane, lane nine I think it is. And Mr. Speaker, that militated against their proper involvement in the sporting activities. When the persons who are engaged in organising this activity, Mr. Keith Joseph of the Athletics Federation and Miss Beverly Neptune of the Ministry of Education, the Deputy Chief Education Officer came to me on the matter, I insisted that the Union Island Secondary School be fully integrated into this exercise and I gave them my word that the requisite resources would be made available to have them participate like any other school in St Vincent and the Grenadines. [Applause] And they have done quite well; they have some very outstanding athletes.

Mr. Speaker, I want to highlight also a matter which was mentioned by the Honourable Minister of Sport and to congratulate them. As one of the newer secondary schools opened during the period of the Education Revolution, the Thomas Saunders Secondary School; last year the Thomas Saunders Secondary School had completed its fifth year that is to say it was the first time that a full complement of its athletes were participating in the games because it now had five forms. And in that year they came first, and this year again they retained

the championship. [Applause] Mr. Speaker, a large number of these children were it not for the Education Revolution would not have been at a secondary school. Most of them would not have been at a secondary school, and just in case anyone says: well they distinguished in athletics but their academics what about that? The first year which was last year they had a score in the region of 70 percent passes at the CXC Examination. If anyone wanted to have a success story of the Education Revolution – this is not to say the Education Revolution does not have its challenges, once we are living organisms and we are in societies we are always going to have challenges. The question is this: what are the opportunities we create and how we address these challenges. Those who look for perfection we have to wait until we get to the heavenly kingdom for perfection; we have to do the best we can in this earthly city and in this particular case we have done quite well by these students and they have reposed their confidence in their parents and in the community by performing well academically and in sports and I want to congratulate them. [Applause]

Mr. Speaker, I just want to have an addendum to this. I remember when this school was being opened we had to convert what was the Richmond Hill Primary School into the Thomas Saunders Secondary School named after a stalwart educator and we faced protest. There were demonstrations in front of the Ministry of Education against putting the secondary school there. The grown men who had migrated to the United States and who had come back and who had retired: professionals said no they wanted their alma mater of the primary school to be retained. And they wrapped it up with all sorts of partisan politics, it was absolutely disgraceful but we communicated with the people as a whole, we held consultations with them and the people said, “Yes, we want the secondary school”, because they were assured that they were enough places in the adjoining primary schools: the nearby primary schools in the city, to accommodate what was in fact the dwindling number of students in the Richmond Hill Primary. And I want to congratulate the staff, the parents and the Ministry of Education for doing quite a good job at Thomas Saunders. And I would like to mention by name the Principal Mr. Renton, again when he was named as the Headmaster you had some protest: the protest was that he was a white man: “What are they bringing a white man to head the school for”? This man is a Vincentian, he had come to live among us from Scotland, he had been trained at the University and he would have been an excellent teacher in the United Kingdom but he choose to live among us. He has put his bucket among us and we are very pleased that he has put his bucket among us. [Knocking on the desk] [Applause]

We have to get away from these narrow perspectives, and it is not every protest that you have to pay any attention to because some of them are designed just to create mischief, Mr. Speaker. And certainly at my age and given my involvement, I am really not going to allow mischief to deter the government and people from progress in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Mr. Speaker, I want to use this opportunity to congratulate Sir Dennis Byron on his appointment, which has been made public as the Chief Justice to succeed the incumbent His Lordship Chief Justice De la Bastide of Trinidad and Tobago. Mr. Speaker, Sir Dennis served as Chief Justice in the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court, and he was subsequently a Judge for the United Nations Court; the Tribunal in Arusha relating to the Rwanda genocide and rose to be the presiding Judge in that particular international court. I have no doubt that he would do very well in his job. He is a splendid Judge, fine intellect and a man of balanced temperament, simply put a wonderful individual. I wish him and the CCJ all the best. I am obliged. [Applause] [Knocking on the desk]

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Okay.

## **CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

**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 the 20 January, 24-28 inclusive of January and on the 3 March that these Minutes be confirmed seriatim.

### **Question put and agreed to**

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, I wish to indicate at this point that the use of cellular phone during a meeting of this Honourable House by Members and of course, by strangers in the gallery is hereby prohibited. There shall be no use of the cellular phone during the meeting of the House of Assembly. There is an incident which I would at some point deal with, but for now I am prohibiting the use of a cellular phone. I am not prohibiting and particular members from bringing a cellular phone into the House but if you need to use it, I ask that it be used outside of the Chamber, okay. I remind especially those strangers in the gallery that you also need to turn off or put on some profile that you would not affect this meeting of the House with your cellular phone while you are here in the House. Thank you very much.

## **STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Prime Minister.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, it is my duty regarding a matter which has arisen during the General Elections to speak to this Honourable House, draw it to the attention of this Honourable House so that we can see how all citizens can work together on a number of matters particularly in this period of reconciliation. At 1:00 o'clock today, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture and the Chief Agricultural Officer and a senior representative from the International Firm Armajaro, which deals with cocoa and Louise Mitchell and myself, we are going to have a discussion on the issue regarding possible cocoa production: enhanced cocoa production in St Vincent and the Grenadines. Mr. Speaker, as we have made plain in the election campaign that the government itself had a programme for the production of cocoa. Perhaps we may have a hundred farmers so that each if we get a hundred that means a hundred people who can make a livelihood but it is not – do not anticipate that you are going to have cocoa on the scale of what we had for bananas.

And nearly two years ago, Mr. Speaker, the British representative, the British High Commissioner in Barbados had introduced to me a British based company called Hotel Chocolatier which operates out of St Lucia, they have a small farm there and they have a factory, which they were building. They produce a high quality of chocolate and they were seeking also to see if they can get into Tobago and wanted to find out about St Vincent and we told them we were interested. That matter is still up in the air but Armajaro is a very large company and Sir James Mitchell former Prime Minister had made a contact with them and had offered that contact to the

government and I would explore that today: I was written about it. Mr. Speaker, it is not because individuals come from opposing political parties that we cannot work together, it is only where we have a situation where people believe that politics is about a pitched battle on a continuous basis.

At the same time since I speak to this issue, I would indicate that Sir James has been in communication with me on a matter called the Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities, which comes out of a group of former leaders: The Interaction Council. He wrote me a letter recently and I spoke to him about the matter and I sent the letter and the Declaration to our Foreign Minister and our Ambassador at the United Nations, to see if we can promote the principles contained therein, and to have the Declaration adopted at the United Nations. As I have said, I spoke yesterday with Sir James at length on this particular Universal Declaration, and I think these two developments one in the area of human responsibilities and the other in the area of further diversifying agriculture into possible cocoa production. I do not know what is going to come of it but (cocoa) but it is important that we explore it. I do not anticipate as I said that we are going to have a situation of cocoa being a commodity, which we will have on the scale of what we had with bananas, but certainly it can be one important item in the whole package of diversification and I want to thank Sir James for introducing Armajaro to me.

When I was a boy, a young man my father grew cocoa in Grace Field and there was a demonstration plot by the then colonial government on part of his lands in Grace Field, a small plot: an acre plus, maybe two acres. So, it is within our tradition to grow cocoa and we will see where it takes us in terms of a particular item along with the others which we are diversifying; cassava, root crops and to look for end usage: value added. And this on top of all of the work which we are doing now at Rabacca with the Taiwanese, the scientific work, I think we can add this to the platform of strengthening agriculture which is very important for us to do.

And I would like to indicate that on Saturday the Ministry of Tourism through the Tourism Authority is rebranding St Vincent and the Grenadines. So that you will see that our pillars both in respect of agriculture and in respect of Tourism, in the case of agriculture our economic mainstay and in terms of Tourism tremendous foreign exchange earner that we are going forward in ways and means in this difficult external environment of the economic challenges of the global meltdown; economic meltdown, to see how we can strengthen our economy and improve the lives of our people.

Mr. Speaker, I must say in this context some immediate challenges are facing us which we have to come to terms with in the economic sphere. Yesterday, the Brent Crude price increased to US \$121 a barrel; we are going to see further increases in electricity no doubt and in the cost of fuel. This has to do not just simply with additional demand but it has to do with the problems in the Middle East and in North Africa. Secondly, Mr. Speaker, food prices are on the rise internationally. In the case of brown sugar we have just been informed that Guysuco would supply us sugar, brown sugar not at the old price of US \$540 a metric ton but at US \$640 a metric ton; that is about 13.5 cents roughly per a pound more. And then wheat prices are going through the roof. You have noticed that there have been recent increases in wheat prices internationally as a result of the problems of whether in Australia, in Russia and in Canada, and also because of the use of alternative grain. For instance corn for bio fuels, over one third of the production of corn is used for bio fuels, a most controversial decision in the United States, but we suffer from these matters. And Mr. Speaker, while persons are engaged in all sorts of antics; it is the duty of all of us to look at what are the serious issues of development before us. I find

that the public discourse focuses on a lot of trivia; I find that working together to find solutions in this particular case with the rise in food prices to see how we can produce a set of commodities alternative commodities and to produce food for us to eat to cut down on the import bill. At the moment, there is a big enterprise we are looking at to see how we can get involved in chicken production.

There is a family in North Leeward which has put in twenty acres of nutmeg which was destroyed by Hurricane Tomas and so on and so forth. There are many things which are happening but you do not hear about them because people are not – these are not sexy subjects they are matters of our well being and we have to look at the changes which are taking place internationally in addressing these issues. In this case, Mr. Speaker, we ourselves have been on the road to promote. As you know, I go to Taiwan sometime in another few days by the 13th and when I return shortly thereafter, I go to Brazil with Invest SVG because we have to see how we can promote in Brazil, which is a country with 190 million people. There are a number of things which we can address with them; one of the power of houses in the next echelon; the number nine economy in the world, it is next door to us and we have to do a lot of work with it. So, we have to keep our focus and we need to go forward.

But I began this discussion, Mr. Speaker, by talking about the meeting which we are having today, and I made it public because I did not want it to be said that we have a meeting with Armajaro and I kept it quite; that I do not want to give Sir James any credit and that the government is not interested in exploring all sorts of possibilities. I must just say, Mr. Speaker, that one story which was put abroad at the time of the elections that companies like this would only deal with the NDP, if the NDP won well, we are in office and we are having a meeting at 1:00 o'clock today. I am obliged.

## **REPORTS FROM SELECT COMMITTEES**

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Member from South Windward.

**HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to lay on the table the Report of the Select Committee on the status of Children Bill 2011. Much obliged.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Prime Minister.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, there is another Bill which is before Select Committee: the Representation of the People Amendment Bill. We had one meeting already and the next meeting is scheduled for May 5. The Members of the government side of that Select Committee plus the Attorney General attended and we invited other groups. The President of the Bar Association came, Misses K Bacchus Browne, Mr. Parnel Campbell Q.C a distinguished lawyer who had written extensively on this Bill and Mr. Godfrey Samuel, the Chairman of the Christian Council attended. And Mr. Speaker, the decision which was taken was for us to look in response to what a number of persons have said publicly including Mr. Campbell that rather than concentrate on two or more sections of the Bill to do an overhaul look at the

Representation of the People Act in its entirety. And everyone has agreed on this including the President of the Bar Association, the Christian Council and as I said Mr. Campbell himself.

Subsequently, Mr. Speaker, the Christian Council has written asking that we put the Bill on hold for them to have an independent study. Mr. Speaker, I have no objection at all to that and I hope that that independent study takes into account a review of the entire Representation of the People Act. We will have the Select Committee meeting as planned on the 5<sup>th</sup> but I doubt whether the Christian Council will be ready by then. And I will hear hopefully before then how much time they wish to have a further extension for their consideration. Mr. Speaker, I want to make the point again that this Bill does not in anyway affect adversely the actions which are being taken in the law courts; absolutely not. This Bill is not retrospective in its effect, and that untruth is being parroted in the newspapers, I saw it in the News Editorial last week and I heard it on the radio. It is just not true, as Mr. Campbell himself has made plain.

Mr. Speaker, our putting the Bill on hold at the request of the Christian Council would also give the lie to those who wish to say we want to pass it quickly to deal with cases which are before the court: that is just not true. It has nothing to do with that; it has no legal effect on that; none whatsoever. So my report on the Select Committee Mr. Speaker is that the work continues in the context in which I have just mentioned.

## **PETITIONS**

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Member for Central Leeward.

**HONOURABLE MAXWELL CHARLES:** Mr. Speaker, before I deal with the petitions I would just like to correct something I said a while ago during the Obituaries. I mentioned the name Joyce Patterson deceased but it is actually Judith, okay. So, I am sorry about that a slip of the tongue, I crave your indulgence.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. [Interjections]

**HONOURABLE MAXWELL CHARLES:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay before this Honourable House, the following five petitions of five different church organisations each seeking incorporation as a body; they are as follows:-

1. The Humble petition of the Trustees of the Christian Pilgrim Fellowship Church.
2. The humble petition of the Trustees of the Bequia Community Church.
3. The humble petition of the Trustees of the Maranatha Baptist Church Incorporation.
4. The humble petition of the Trustees of the St Joseph's Spiritual Baptist Church.
5. The humble petition of the Trustees of the Prayer and Faith Assembly Incorporation.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay these five petitions before the Honourable House, thank you

## PAPERS

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, may I just before the presentation of the Papers, lay on this table, the table of this Honourable House, the Minutes of the Finance Committee held yesterday at the Foreign Affairs Conference Room regarding the Supplementary Estimates and Supplementary Appropriation Bill. Also Mr. Speaker, the Minutes of the meeting hitherto, in relation to supplementaries: they are both attached and I lay them on the table of this Honourable House.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Member for West St George, you were hidden by the microphone.

**HONOURABLE CECIL MCKIE:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to lay on the table before this Honourable House to be placed on record the Financial Statements of the Central Water and Sewage Authority for the year ended June 30, 2010 with comparative figures for 2009.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable Prime Minister

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay on the table of this Honourable House a paper which has been circulated entitled the Report of the Director of Audit of the Public Accounts for St Vincent and the Grenadines 2008. Mr. Speaker, may I crave your indulgence to make an appeal to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition? Mr. Speaker, section 76 of the Constitution of St Vincent and the Grenadines says:-

**“The House shall at the commencement of each session appoint a Public Accounts Committee from among its Members whose duties shall be to consider the accounts referred to in section 75 (2) of this Constitution in conjunction with the Report of the Director of Audit and in particular to report to the House:**

- a. **In the case of excess or unauthorised expenditure of public funds the reason for such expenditure.**
- b. **Any measure it considers necessary in order to ensure that public funds are properly spent, and such other duties relating to the public accounts as the House may from time to time direct”.**

Mr. Speaker, in accordance with convention in our Parliament, the Leader of the Opposition is the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee and I supposed, Mr. Speaker, as happened in Britain and some other parliaments including small parliaments, like for instance even in the Cayman Islands he can designate someone with the approval of this House to be Chairman, someone from his side. Mr. Speaker, I really would like the

Public Accounts Committee to meet. The Public Accounts Committee has met in ten years on two occasions, surely this is unacceptable and the Honourable Leader of the Opposition has a duty to do what is required of him constitutionally. Mr. Speaker, you may recall that the Constitution which was not approved in November last 2009 strengthened the powers of the Leader of the Opposition and that of the Public Accounts Committee to actually subpoena Members and to subpoena public servants and those in statutory bodies to cross-examine them. They have no such power currently, but the new Constitution would have given them that power, but even under the existing authority, Mr. Speaker, which involves the examination of these accounts and to look at all the matters contained therein, I would like to see this committee function. I have complained, Mr. Speaker, you may recall before, I have done so from time to time. It is not usual that Ministers of Finance demand that the Public Accounts Committee meet, because the Public Accounts Committee may show up weaknesses in the work of the Ministry of Finance, but I do not mind the weaknesses in the Ministry of Finances be shown up because I want to see those weaknesses or limitations corrected. [Applause] I want that and the Public Accounts Committee helps in this regard, it is not the only instrument but it is one which helps, so I am appealing again to him.

I just want to say parenthetically, Mr. Speaker, that we have to be careful when persons who are outside who do not really understand these things write. I saw a letter in the newspaper written to the Governor General by one Mr. Ivan O’Neal the Leader I have been advised of a Party known as the Green Party, he says that he wants the Governor General to appoint him to head the Public Accounts Committee by virtue of his own tremendous training and experience and competence. Unfortunately, for Mr. O’Neal, the Constitution says:-

**“The House shall at the commencement of each session appoint the Public Accounts Committee from amongst its Members”.**

I do not as yet know whether Mr. O’Neal is a Member of this Honourable House but yet the newspapers published this thing without comment. All you had to do is just look at the Constitution and see that it is just a mischievous letter and this is what I have been talking about earlier. So, Mr. Speaker, I lay the Report of the Director of Audit with the Accounts and make an appeal yet again to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition as a Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee. I am obliged.

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

### **MOTIONS**

1. Motion on Private Sector Development.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker may I, though we always have a difficulty the Rule says that I must make this Motion before the commencement of government business, this is not government business but I have to make the Motion before 5:00 o’clock so that if non government business; private members business is finished at 5:00 and I get up at 5:01 to move the Motion, I cannot move it because the Rule says I have to move it at 5:00 o’clock, so I am trapped. So, what I seek to do, Mr. Speaker, is to crave

your indulgence and move this requisite Motion prior to, so that I do not find myself trapped by what is a gap in the Rules.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move under Standing Order 12 (5) that the proceedings of today's Sitting be exempted from the provision of the Standing Order Hours of Sitting.

### **Question put and agreed to**

**HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE:** Mr. Honourable Members, I ask that Motion No. 2 be considered to be Motion No. 1 and that we make the relevant corrections: Motion of the performance of the Unity Labour Party in government becomes No. 1 Motion; and Motion on Private Sector Development becomes No. 2.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members:-

**WHEREAS** the Unity Labour Party (ULP) was elected on March 28, 2001, to form the Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines;

**AND WHEREAS** the ULP was re-elected to governmental office in successive general elections in 2005 and 2010;

**AND WHEREAS** the tenth anniversary of the election of the ULP to lead the government of St Vincent and the Grenadines is an appropriate time to reflect upon its performance thus far;

**AND WHEREAS** the ULP administration has delivered excellent governance in all areas of public policy especially those of job creation and wealth creation, poverty reduction, education, health, housing, physical infrastructure, law and order, democratic governance, sports, culture, regional integration, foreign policy, youths and the elderly.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that this Honourable House commend the ULP government on its excellent governance of St Vincent and the Grenadines over the past ten years and urge it to keep in close communion with the people as a whole so as to enhance further its sterling performance thus far.

**HONOURABLE ELVIS CHARLES:** I second the Motion.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, the Motion having been moved; that is Motion on the performance of the ULP Government having been moved and seconded is now up for debate. Honourable Senator, since you are leading the debate, you have 1 hour; everyone else has 45 minutes; beginning now.

**HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I consider it a privilege to stand in this Honourable House to speak on the successes of the Unity Labour Party as we celebrate our Tenth

Anniversary. It is not an easy thing to do two terms in a time when everything seems to be very difficult. The successive approach the Unity Labour Party has had over the past ten years is overwhelming. In the area of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Government has placed great emphasis in developing the Agriculture Industry, so to create the essential wealth and sustenance of life in St Vincent and the Grenadines. The establishment of the Agriculture Training Institute, this will ensure that training for a minimum of 400 farmers, entrepreneurs, and I believe Mr. Speaker, not only Vincentians will benefit from this but other students from the region.

Mr. Speaker, the Unity Labour Party has advanced agriculture to the next level. The Lauders Agro Processing Incorporation has been formed and is working well to benefit all the farmers in St Vincent and the Grenadines [Applause] The Dumbarton Hatchery, I praise very much, Mr. Speaker has produced over 300,000 the old chicks in layers and a similar count in broilers. Being a farmer, Mr. Speaker, the days of importations are far gone when you have the old chicks sit at airports throughout the Caribbean waiting on a flight to come to St Vincent. [Unanimous: yes! Yes! Yes! and applause] When they arrive at your farm the mortality rate is over 20 percent, now the old chicks arrive at your farm two hours, three hours after being hatched with a mortality rate of zero. [Applause] I congratulate Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Minister for Agriculture for his effort and his continuing hard work in this regard.

Training and capacity building in agriculture is not very often seen it is intangible and farmers today, including myself, could stand as a testimony of the work of the Unity Labour Party in developing our knowledge, build our capacity as farmers that can sit anywhere around the region, anywhere around the world and prove that we can do agriculture extremely well because we have learnt and we have learnt well. [Applause] It is the work, Mr. Speaker, of the Unity Labour Party to increase the production of various crops, dasheen, tannia, sweet potatoes, ginger, all root crops, vegetables you name it, Mr. Speaker. It is under this government that an environment has been created to perform as a farmer. It is under this government that farmers see the need to diversify; it is under this government that farmers reach out in a more cohesive manner in our country. The Unity Labour Party we are not only better by far we are the best by far [Applause]

A modern Fishery Complex at Owia. Mr. Speaker, in my short time on earth I have owned two fishing boats. I have struggled to maintain my life at sea and ever so often when I go it is a place I consider I tell all my secrets there and the government of this country would have proven again to the fisher folk that we are strong willed and we are bent in supporting their cause in developing the industry. Mr. Speaker, it is not easy to be a fisher folk in a small two by four country like St Vincent but you are in good hands under the Unity Labour Party [Applause] a government that sees the need to improve the Industry; a government that continues to improve the Industry.

Mr. Speaker, farmers have constantly cried out for crops and livestock. At some point and time we would have wanted to believe that because of stealing that agriculture would become a thing of the past in our country; but every time I look at the laws and the legislation that has been presented before this Honourable House I say thank God for the Unity Labour Party, and the hard work of Minister Saboto Caesar in crafting this document. [Applause] I read the document several times, Mr. Speaker, as a farmer and I know the hard work that was put into it but the government did not stop at that particular time, we then hired rural constables.

Mr. Speaker, it is not easy to lose two of your goats, it is not easy for someone to harvest your crop of dasheen but the Unity Labour Party means business in farming and we are serious in seeing that farmers improve themselves and secure their valuables. It is a move that I am overwhelmingly happy with; there are areas that we can strengthen and the Unity Labour Party will continue to do so. The better government for this time Mr. Speaker; we do not shadow any Ministry, we make it happen. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was asked by a friend what do I think of the Unity Labour Party stance on agriculture since Hurricane Tomas? The Unity Labour Party compared to St Lucia our government has done way more since Hurricane Tomas by far. [Applause] Farmers are replanting, farmers have gotten fertilizers, farmers have gotten the opportunity to put in new seedlings and diversify into new crops. It is amazing a small country with limited resources doing big things.

Mr. Speaker, before I decided to make farming my career there were folks who would have been saying to me it is not the better thing to do. Now, my achievement under agriculture would have allowed my friends to be saying, I worked through a window that they wished they would have worked through. With agriculture we see food security; in agriculture we see a development of our people. Long gone the days when it was considered to be a career that is by the side. We have students who are returning home with degrees in various areas of agriculture. Mr. Speaker, the Unity Labour Party has not created an environment of success alone, we are a Hallmark of success [Applause]

Mr. Speaker, if I am to speak on this Motion in its entirety, it will take days for us to go through what the Unity Labour Party has done for ten years: it is ten versus seventeen some would say and others would say it is a tough ten years. A ten year period where the global economy collapsed, a ten year period where we had foot and mouth disease SARS, you name it but we have fought and we have fought extremely well and we can stand today with a testimony of our work.

Mr. Speaker, in health and wellness, the Unity Labour Party administration had built a well-equipped Polyclinic at Stubbs and a Health Center in Evesham for a total cost of \$4.1 million. Mr. Speaker, ever so often I heard folks mentioning that most of our projects appeared to be overestimated and even the Honourable Opposition Leader query about the figures that were brought forward after Hurricane Tomas. But I listened to my news last night, Mr. Speaker, and I observed that the Greaves would have done an excellent work in renovating toiletries facilities at the cruise ship berth. Now, I believe if it was the Unity Labour Party administration working on that project somebody would have been alarmed with the figures, renovating toilet facilities cost over \$100,000. You see Mr. Speaker, some folks refuse to get down to the paperwork and analyse the cost of projects, and some folks just talk and cannot do much more than talk. But I praise the Greaves for their effort and I encourage more private firms, more corporate firms in St Vincent to embrace projects like these and develop our country holistically.

It is the Unity Labour Party Government, Mr. Speaker, that had restored the administrative wing at the Kingstown General Hospital. It is the Unity Labour Party that has provided the Polyclinic at Stubbs with 24 hrs service. It must not be overlooked you know, Mr. Speaker, because the regular thing is you will never find a clinic that would go 24 hrs but we are broad spanding our thinking, while some folks are calling for the renovation at the General Hospital, we have taken a broader approach. Studying of the demographic trends in our country we see the need to develop these Polyclinics. There are a few more that will be built and the

Government will continue to work in this regard. The number of nurses, Mr. Speaker, that have been trained in St Vincent since the Unity Labour Party took governance it is overwhelming. [Applause] We must be reminded of our past where we had twenty persons getting into nursing and ever so often your qualification will not bear the mark it will be who you know. But a government of love and appreciation for the people took office and we have moved from 20 to about 100; we have moved the market from local to international [Applause] wherever our nurses go, Mr. Speaker, they excel and are well spoken of. They give the very best in patient care and whatsoever academic areas they follow through, Mr. Speaker, they pursue it well.

Mr. Speaker, it is easy to build these facilities and create the opportunities but a figure that is not counted and never presented in our Estimates is that of the environment: the culture that has been created under the Unity Labour Party for excellence. It is one that we cannot put a figure on. Each student in nursing works very hard to follow through their three year studies, there are even more persons wanting to get into the programme. There is a desire that is going on in this country to succeed in whatever career field prior to ten years ago; that we must be overwhelmingly happy and feel proud about. [Applause] Mr. Speaker, it is easy for government to claim in their manifesto what they want to do, it is pen and paper but following through what you have said in your manifesto and bringing it to reality is a little phrase I often use in my small business express business concept and I will use it here today, Mr. Speaker, the Unity Labour Party is a Party that operates from conception to realisation. [Applause] Every idea that is brought forward, everything that is documented in our manifestos is worked upon and we have pursued them as a team, Mr. Speaker.

We have renovated twenty one health centers; prior to this some nurses were housed in dilapidated buildings. We have built three modern medical clinics: Biabou, Greggs, Retreat in the South Leeward area and we are currently building the modern medical complex at Georgetown. [Applause] Mr. Speaker, if I were in Opposition given the ideas and the plans and the successes of the Unity Labour Party I would feel comfortable to remain in opposition because the work and works of this Party in Government are by far untouchable. [Applause] \$1.5 million Mr. Speaker has been invested in a comprehensive health information system. I recall as a child going to the clinic they will pull your file and if you have not gone there for ten years or fifteen years there might be some struggle in finding your documents, and what you would have suffered from in the past, and if your file really exists. Or what your parents would have suffered from, but a government has invested \$1.5 million in a health information system let us not take it for granted, Mr. Speaker. [Applause]

You see, when we travel overseas and we observe that these systems are abroad it is easy for us to say I love this place I do not want to come back to St Vincent, it is nice here but when it is homegrown and home born you must feel the same way, Mr. Speaker, and understand that even at home where our country is just 2ft x 4ft as I usually say, we can be very much appreciative of what a government is doing with limited resources. [Applause]

In the aspect of Water and Waste Management, I was not that young, and I recalled Glen Jackson stalwart of the Unity Labour Party in a Shake Up programme calling on the private sector to clean up Kingstown. It is ten years ago but its memory is the past to remember now in the present. Mr. Speaker, Kingstown and rural areas were terrible when coming to waste; I would have seen private persons using their vehicles to discard public garbage. We can overlook it; it is better now there is a systematic approach now; [Applause] but a government

that would have met problems and did not cry, scream or bawl embraced it and converted it into what it is today.

I put out my garbage last week, Mr. Speaker, I was a bit late and the guys waited at my gate for the garbage; prior to this particular period under the Unity Labour Party is something I would have seen recently in Trinidad and Tobago. St Vincent a small country when you visit Arima, St James and Dunder Hill area, the garbage is put outside and it is there for about a week; everybody plays in it: cats, dogs, rats and if you are not careful small kids. But a small country like St Vincent and the Grenadines 2ft x 4ft we can feel overwhelmingly comfortable that there is a systematic approach [Applause] regarding garbage disposal.

Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister opened the pathway for development in this country a lot of folks cried about where we are going to get the funds from, ever so often they scream. Sometimes I have wondered how we are going to get certain projects out of the way, like the Windward Water Project at Jennings. I am not sure what would have led the government to take on such a project of \$23 million at that time, but I am very much sure, Mr. Speaker, had it not been at that time we would have suffered like other Caribbean Island the drought period that recently happened. Over 95 percent of Vincentians now have pipe borne water; 'Water for All' was the project and the Unity Labour Party meant it by heart. There are a few areas here and there Mr. Speaker, but with the aim of a government that embraces all and rejects none the 5 percent that is missing from this 95 percent will soon be incorporated.

Mr. Speaker, it is the Unity Labour Party that has built landfill at Belle Isle and Diamond. There was a brief period in our history under the previous administration where garbage would have been burnt in your backyard. There is a period in the past where private sector would have dumped it anywhere they could once you cannot notice, but the government of the day has not only seek to provide these facilities, we seek to educate our people as well on usage and recycling of materials that can be, as I would consider safe from the landfill. I am of the strong opinion, Mr. Speaker, that whenever we are disposing of our garbage we must remember strongly ten, twelve years ago; you could have easily gotten a free flight from Eustace Auto Supplies downtown all the way up to the new NIS building, because of the amount of flies around.

Mr. Speaker, we could easily overlook that we are getting cruise ships now and in the past they would have written to us claiming that they are not coming to St Vincent because the Capital is too dirty. We can easily overlook the improvement of the solid waste; we can easily overlook the human resources that have curbed and surrounded themselves in that particular field around the Unity Labour Party and thank God for the opportunities that was provided under this Party. The workers at CWSA who went to school with me, Mr. Speaker, who are comfortable in their job and if you were to ask them fifteen years ago if they would have worked toward a career in that particular field they would have told you no. The Unity Labour Party has polished every career field you can think about and encouraged Vincentian to embrace them. [Applause]

In education, it is often said that we speak too much about the Education Revolution. Prior to 2005, 39 percent of our twelve-year old were in school, we could easily overlook that now. Ever so often Honourable Member, Saboto Caesar, would make reference to his days on a shift system, now Mr. Speaker that is extinct under the Unity Labour Party. [Applause] We have been assured that there is universal education for all; no child shall be

left behind. Mr. Speaker, there are those who believe that we are governing for ourselves but never a moment have I heard the Honourable Prime Minister mentioned education for Labour alone; never before have I heard the Prime Minister say: I have won by the largest margin, so put the secondary schools in my constituency. Mr. Speaker, those who believe that the Unity Labour Party is singular rather than plural they have a lot of long years on the other side of this Honourable House. The government is now focusing on early childhood education and has drafted standards that operate these centers, we have recognised that the early childhood years of a child is most important and a good foundation must be set.

Mr. Speaker, I never spoke about my parents before, but on my trip back from Holland several years ago when my mom opened the house door about 1:00 o'clock the morning welcoming me back home, the very first thing I said to her was, thank you for sending me to school [Applause] as water flowed from my eyes, Mr. Speaker, a poor family with a big vision. Ever so often, you know, Mr. Speaker, my size is being discussed on the other side; [Laughter] and ever so often, Mr. Speaker, they tend to remind me where I come from, but in this modern world, in this era in St Vincent that has been created by the Unity Labour Party, where you come from does not matter, Mr. Speaker, it is where you are going. [Applause] You see someone look at me today and I am dressed like a farmer heading to my farm to see about my pigs or to prune some tomatoes and two days later they see me walk into this Honourable House all suited: I said to a young lady some days ago, I usually dress for where I am going and not where I come from. [Applause]

I respect the laws of this land and I embrace that we have an opposition but when ten years of work outclassed seventeen years of work and when an excellent team on this side of the House [Interjection] (being the shortest Member I accept that Ces) hold firm to perform well, and to focus every day on the development of this country, I believe the work of the General Secretary in the next general elections would be much easier. I believe the Honourable Julian Francis would be able to take a trip off to some Caribbean Island to one of the hot springs in Dominica because the rate of governance and the rate of development in this country is overwhelming and it will be noticed that the catch up that has to be played by the opposition would never make it for a very, very long time.

Universal education for all Mr. Speaker: I sat in a classroom in a university in Holland doing some courses in agriculture and realised that it is not where I come from 2f x4ft but where I am going. I returned home thanks to the Unity Labour Party, I was one of two students in the classroom who came from private sector but the only student who got public sector assistance. Now, Mr. Speaker, this is a story I would tell my children: we had in the classroom Asia, Europe, Africa and students from all over the globe, when I pointed out where St Vincent was someone asked me if it is pure dirt or pure sand. But I was able to sit in a classroom perform well, extremely well, Mr. Speaker, and at that particular time no one wondered if St Vincent has 100,000 people, no one wondered if our government is strong and no one wondered about the state of the economy. They saw a young man brave enough and who was willing to seek to improve himself in agriculture; thanks to the government of St Vincent and the Grenadines. [Applause]

Now Mr. Speaker, there was this gentleman in the class from Senegal and he said to me: "Look, listen in our country you from private sector and you are developing yourself building capacity, you go to the bank and you borrow money to do so": Nigeria. Those folks who were in the classroom were people with PhD and MA in

agriculture but they were workers of the government, Extension Officers, persons who taught at various universities and they would have been able to get some sort of scholarship because of that fact. The Unity Labour Party administration and I stand as a testimony of this, never asked me when I approached them if I would be willing to be a candidate five, six or seven years later. They never asked me if I am Labour or if I am any other Party, as the Prime Minister looked through my eyes and hugged me that Saturday morning he saw a young man who wanted to develop himself. [Applause]

Mr. Speaker, we would have built in Union Island, in Fair Hall, in Edinboro and in Peter's Hope four brand new schools. In the private arena, I was part of the project, the company that I worked at as an Accountant won the bid to haul the containers to the various schools and I was amazed, Mr. Speaker, of the environment. I would be frank, I would be honest with you; I have seen schools throughout the region that are not well equipped as these schools. I have seen schools outside of the region, Mr. Speaker, oil rich countries that do not have the facilities that have been presented in these schools. [Applause] I am of the opinion, Mr. Speaker, that government needs to change, opposition needs to realise that when it is well done: it is well done, when we have students holding ten and eleven O'levels. No one asked Honourable Elvis Charles when he marks pass papers overseas – he never asked if this child studied in a ply board school, he never asked if it is a single parent home; he marks the paper and a distinction is given to a child. And if we are to do follow ups and I will encourage Vincentians to do so and make it public of some of these testimonies that exist today. If we are to do follow up on a lot of these students who have performed well, they would have failed the common entrance, they would have gone to a school that folks would have called or could call not the better school. They would have come from some environment that folks would say nothing good could come out of that, but the Unity Labour Party has changed all of that. We have rounded a feeling; there is a vibe of development, no student study anymore and say I am in a school that is built with ply, because it was said by the Prime Minister, it is not the building it is the environment that is created in and outside of the building; [Applause] excellent teachers, excellent government and an improvement in parenting.

Mr. Speaker, I remember in the past myself and Senator Baptiste would have sat at the public library studying those were good old days. I complained every single time hot, noisy and lack of certain resources; and I wish there was a day that I can be sitting in a comfortable library at that time. [Applause] But the Unity Labour Party has delivered and has delivered well

**HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON:** Which one you are talking about; the one down Middle Street there?

**HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE:** The one down Middle Street.

**HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON:** By the storeroom?

**HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE:** I remember Glen in his description he said at one time, “A building located next to a rum shop, how could we put our young people to develop themselves in such an environment”? Over the past three months I have visited the Public Library and I still get lost. The building other than being big because you can have a lot of big buildings you know Mr. Speaker, but it is well utilised

for the development of our people. [Applause] There is a company out of Canada called VEN REZ Enterprises and they would have won the bid to deliver furniture to the school and the Public Library, one of their representatives was here recently and I chatted with him just before he left at the airport and he said to me, Mr. Speaker, “You guys in St Vincent are serious with development”. This company has been doing business in St Vincent for a very long time. But in spite of all the global challenges he has realised that our government do not carry a full stop, we do not make excuses, Mr. Speaker, we make it happen. There is no better time than now for us to say let us keep the old library building, price of oil is escalating, then oil was cheap, lands were easy to locate then but once there is the conception there will always be the realisation.

Mr. Speaker, the one laptop per child; some folks would have believed that a laptop would have come in as a toy, so a child just get a laptop because the Unity Labour Party say they are giving away a laptop to a child and it was a political gimmick. This initiative will change St Vincent forever, Mr. Speaker. [Applause] I visited Trinidad and Tobago in their general elections and I observed a lot, both Parties were claiming to deliver one laptop for a child and some folks claim that they were copying. The opposition mentioned something that they will be doing but they still have to work out the logistics and what time and who gets what; but when a government could secure 30,000 laptops without spending a cent is a government that deserves “*a buy*” as we would say on the block. Is a government that deserves not only an extra tap on the back but should be relieved by the people; and I call on folks to understand this, there are folks who have been praying for the development of St Vincent and the Grenadines, 30,000 laptops free is not here by guess.

There are folks, who have been calling out to the Almighty Father to deliver us with blessings so when it comes, we do not scream that the boxes are empty; we do not wonder what the implementation process will be, we all go to church on a wonderful Sunday, whether we are opposition or government and thank God for such a blessing. Because, Mr. Speaker, the good God would not bless the government of the Unity Labour Party alone, he said the government that is in power he upholds, so if it was the NDP blessings would have come anyway, Mr. Speaker. But some folks cannot accept the fact that the Unity Labour Party is in Office and because so when we pray and ask God for blessings, the Party in office is the Party that would be recognised.

We must be humble, Mr. Speaker, I wish the opposition were here today but I observed that they took a day off. It is a wonderful day to go to the beach but we have to get the work of the people completed. Never in our history, Mr. Speaker, the initiative of one laptop per a child, could not be realised. When the Prime Minister mentioned it in Barrouallie, I could not say a thing because I knew there were countries in the region that made the approach and failed. When another government donating 30,000 laptops we must ... Mr. Speaker, I hold this initiative to other great initiatives, the right to vote and the right to see every human being as being equal.

If St Vincent and the Grenadines is left out of this information age we are lost forever Mr. Speaker; we are lost. And when a government realises that we need to move ahead with the world trends, the opposition question should not have been: whether the boxes are empty or who is observing the flights that came but how can we be part of this project? How can we fall in to assist? But if your only aim is to win an election then there is very little that you will see, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, out of this one laptop for child initiative there will be a transformation of every sector in this country, you see farming will now take a new look, a new era. I will be able sooner or later to tap in to the government website and know what we paid for tomatoes ten or five years

ago. A student in agriculture could easily research what best crop should be put in at this particular time, and I will use agriculture because long gone the days when we use cutlass and hoe and fork as the main tools ...

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

**HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE:** [Thank you Mr. Speaker] ... long gone those days; we now have at our disposal a laptop. There is no classroom in agriculture that would be complete without a laptop, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Unity Labour Party Government under housing and Informal settlement has created opportunities for over 380 persons to own crown lands. Housing project was a no, no, under the previous administration and their failure is again our success: an imported company, Colonial Homes, a local department housing and land development. There is one particular project in Clare Valley that carries about 300 lots but over 900 applicants, Mr. Speaker, it is because the Unity Labour Party has initiated a programme for housing that is second to none.

In tourism Mr. Speaker, we have upgraded fourteen tourism sites making them more attractive not only for locals but visitors as well, and on any given holiday or weekend these sites are packed. In my research of the Estimates recently, I have gone back 1998, 1999 and 2000 and I have seen the Botanic Gardens under the Ministry of Agriculture in the Estimates but under this administration it has been moved over to tourism and have been developed along with all the other sites as key areas for tourists and for locals. It is easy to look back to what existed before, it is easy, Mr. Speaker, and we must be willing to realise that this government is doing well in tourism. I am scheduled to travel to Barbados shortly and if it is not the Unity Labour Party led by an excellent Prime Minister with vision my suitcase would have been tied on to my foot and I would have been swimming from Lowman's Bay to Barbados or I might have hired a Pier Rug and get lost half the way. But the Unity Labour Party, Mr. Speaker, we rescued LIAT [Applause] and we invested in LIAT. The Leader of the Opposition said, "Don't invest any more money in that airline". Sir James said it, I heard it: he said it as well.

Now, let me go back a bit, Mr. Speaker, the Jennings Water Project built and soon after there was a drought in the region, investment in LIAT and soon after it was the only airline in the sky, these things do not happen by chance, you know, Mr. Speaker, it is because the Government of the day has a vision and the people are praying for this government to be successful, Mr. Speaker. [Applause] There are other Members who wish to speak, Mr. Speaker, but I will tell you I cannot stop without talking about the Argyle International Airport one Member of the Opposition said that it would never happen; never. I believe on the first flight he would still be in that position, it will never happen because it appears to be so hard to do on their side that they believe that the Prime Minister and the Members of this side of the Honourable House would have taken some strong drink and their vision would have been impaired. I heard on one Talk Show a member of the opposition playing a cartoon when it was said we are going to build Argyle International Airport: he switched on some cartoon guy laughing but all it does is encourage a government to work and to perform. All it does it makes young people like me to come forward to support the Unity Labour Party.

Mr. Speaker, Sister Rene Baptiste initiated the Gospel Fest she was responsible for renaming Heritage Square, I do not want us to forget these things, I travelled to Europe and got specialist treatment because Pirate of the Caribbean filmed in St Vincent and the Grenadines and that is a fact, Mr. Speaker. I sat with business people in Europe and got privileges because St Vincent was recognised as an excellent place because of Pirate of the Caribbean. What a government, Mr. Speaker.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Two minutes.

**HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE:** Mr. Speaker, as I close did you know, Mr. Speaker, that prior to the ULP administration in office vehicles used by the Police Department were similar to those of the cartoon Flintstone, Mr. Speaker? [Laughter] Ah! Mr. Speaker, did you know that it is under this government that senior 1, 2 and 3 became extinct in our school system? Mr. Speaker, this one you may know, the Unity Labour Party has secured a third term in office and we are out of election mode and there are those who believe, Mr. Speaker ... the loss has been so great they still come out every day hoping that it is tomorrow to vote. There are those who called the wrong date of election, Mr. Speaker, and there are those who still cannot believe it is over; but we have realised that that moment has gone and we have won the elections, we are celebrating ten years, Mr. Speaker, and we are holding firm to develop this country. Mr. Speaker, I thank you and I am much obliged. [Applause]

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Senator Francis, Minister of Transport and Works.

**HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS:** Mr. Speaker, I would have come later on, on this matter but I want to ask your permission to leave the House today at 1:00 o'clock so I could attend the funeral of young Fitz Da Silva: Patrick Da Silva; who is an extended member of my family, Mr. Speaker, in Colonarie. So, if I could just put in my two cents worth in this Motion here, I will be in time to get to the funeral at 2:00 o'clock.

Mr. Speaker, I supposed it is not by accident that we are here going through this Motion today, which has been brought by the private members. Today, normally the opposition would [have] moved a motion but you cannot move a motion with nine empty chairs so I suppose the motion that they are moving today is outside with plain clothes, not dressed for parliament. On that matter, Mr. Speaker, I am told ... well last night I deliberately sat in front of my radio and listened to the New Democratic Party last night motivating their supporters to come out and protest today. And the reasons for protest are so many, Mr. Speaker, that I cannot remember which one I would pick if I were a supporter of the New Democratic Party. That is why I was just advised two minutes ago that the boat that is organised for North Leeward to bring up their supporters in fact came up but came up empty. [Laughter]

Mr. Speaker, this motion tells a long story about the Unity Labour Party. I want to say clearly up front that the Unity Labour Party has been people's choice and I am glad that CDC has brought back in people's choice in the judgement in Carnival. I saw Hugh Ragguette saying so in the papers this weekend. The Unity Labour Party has won the price people's choice on four consecutive occasions [Applause] 1998 we lost the election but we got people's choice, we got the majority of the votes; 2001 we won both people's choice and the most seats; 2005 we won people's choice and the most seats and in 2010 we again won the people's choice and the majority of

the seats. [Applause] That is why we are here with every single chair on this side of the House full and all the chairs on the other side empty. They might as well take up permanent residence outside because it is obvious to me, and I consider myself quite an activist for this political party which is in government that there is no good intention to come from the New Democratic Party in this House of Assembly for this five-year period, I am convinced in my mind that that would not be so.

And you know Mr. Speaker, the celebration and the performance of the Unity Labour Party government has been so outstanding that I could understand the feeling of the New Democratic Party. We have performed so well in such a short space of time that no other political party government could carry the credentials of having performed better than us: none. There was the Joshua regime, Cato regime, there was the Mitchell regime and for the shortest, I think that would go down in the Guinness Book of Records the shortest regime ever survived in St Vincent for five months when Sir James Mitchell realising that the ascendancy of the Unity Labour Party was unstoppable that he wanted to retire not out and he left poor the Honourable Leader of the Opposition Arnhim Eustace having carved out a seat by gerrymandering the constituencies where he won his seat the first time by 27 votes. The next time he won it by 40 votes; next time he beat me with 157 votes and this time he beat me by 472 votes; but he is going down has gone down will and will forever go down in the history of St Vincent and the Grenadines as the shortest serving Prime Minister of St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Our performance, Mr. Speaker, has been so outstanding and the NDP should really congratulate us for the way we have performed instead of taking to the streets with the trivia that they are carrying on with. Every day is another reason to be on the streets, well if you have tried for three elections and you cannot win the elections you have to try a different way to get into government. So, they want to try it by riot rather than the ballot, the ballot is not going to work and the riot is not going to work because the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines have concluded, including the New Democratic Party supporters, that it is a waste of time coming outside to say that you are supporting a leadership that is as weak as the one that we have there.

Mr. Speaker, the New Democratic Party won their election in 1984, they won again in 1989, they won again in 1994 and they barely scrape home in 1998, well give the Unity Labour Party a chance to carry out its mandate from the people nah. In 1989 you got all fifteen seats not a single soul opposed you in the House of Parliament, you had empty chairs for five years, you are now losing the election again by one seat but we still have a majority of the voters who vote in the Election. So, remember the glory days and sit out and wait your turn, and see if you can get it another time in 2015 because you cannot get it in 2010, 2010 done come and gone; we done win the Election you know. Because I hear them on the radio, Mr. Speaker, they are speaking over the same matters they have spoken throughout the Referendum that they say they won 13/2: fine. The same subject matters that they debated in the 2010 elections that they lost by 1,500 in the popular vote and by 1 seat. They have recommenced that campaign, every single subject matter under the sun is being brought to bear. You just tried it

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** They look forward to the past.

**HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS:** You call an election; you have been demanding that the political leader and the Prime Minister call elections from the 25 November. In fact, Mr. Speaker, during the election campaign

on the 25 November they had a celebratory rally for the victory in 2009 [Laughs] they had a celebratory rally to celebrate the electoral victory in 2009. We got 22,000 votes, they got 29,000 votes; we came back in 2010 and we get 32,000 votes and they got 1,000 votes more. So, we recouped over 10,000 and put back the Unity Labour Party in government; put your hands together for the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines. [Applause] Mr. Speaker, fighting elections and winning government all this is relevant you know, Mr. Speaker, for those who may say I am speaking only politics that is my role. I am only in this House because of politics you know, so clearly I never won a seat, I will never win a seat [Laughter] but I happen to be a good General Secretary of my Party and a good Campaign Manager of my Party and I gave them three electoral victories [Applause] and that is why I am in the Parliament. So, it pays me to keep my Party winning so I could stay in parliament. Who wants to say he who pays the piper calls the tune, I know who is paying me [Laughter] and I am singing that tune there. [Laughs]

The majority, all those over there who ... they can do what they want, they have to first move from over there and come over here and in between over there and over here you have to meet me in the middle [Laughter] and when they get past me in the middle then they can start to *pampaset*: all now, blow your trumpets outside.

Mr. Speaker, the New Democratic Party has started its protest immediately after the elections of 2010, the thing about Bills is a cover, it is a joke and today they have expanded it so much that the people even forget that they have been protesting about Bills you know. The reasons for coming out to protest are so many now the two Bills got lost in the process and in the speeches of the New Democratic Party. The first truck they sent out advertising the first protest Honourable Senator Vynette Frederick was on it along with Patches Knights; they drove from Kingstown to Fancy and what they were saying: "Come on out and protest, we are going to bring down this government". New government in place that was their motivation not no Bill do not let anybody fool you. So, they have tried and something will surface soon, I am not talking about it today because I have had a discussion with my political leader on it; a certain lawyer who send a certain piece of correspondence talking some nonsense about people issuing threats but we will deal with it properly and I will come public with it when it comes. You will understand that they have tried private criminal charges against persons who spoke on the platform but Julian Francis in the midst of the election never went on a public platform. I may chair or start a meeting if the Chairman is late but you will find me disappearing into the crowd early, early, early. So, they have nothing that I have said during the elections to say that they can bring private criminal charges against me; but they have found, they have created and they have concocted. The same lawyers and I have the letter but I will deal with it not today another day; because I have had certain advice from my political leader.

It is a good thing that he advised me just now outside because I might have talked about it today. [Laughter] I am a wise fellow before I talk anything I always try to discuss it with my leader. When I said that I was going to whistle in here and they said it is pure dogs we have; well whether we call them hog, pig, ant or dog they know when a whistle is a whistle, and on the 27 March the whistle was made and we flooded Rabacca with 25,000 plus [Laughs] [Applause] I counted outside this morning if I get 60 I get plenty.

Imagine a party that got 32,099 with the opposition protesting every week can bring a crowd of 25,000 out of that 32,000 to Rabacca to celebrate with us: that is no easy feat you know, that shows commitment and dedication from the supporters of the Unity Labour Party. [Applause] Call them all the hog you want, the ant

you want, the dog you want; we do not get vex with the name you call us. Whatever you call us we accept it. They had called us red ants and we accepted it, we love it, we said whenever red ants' bite you and it roll over and it bite you again and you cannot find it in your clothes, by the time you are done, you have ten bumps on your skin from one red ant. And then on the following day they said well we done burn out ourselves in Rabacca, even supporters of the Unity Labour Party some of them said, "Boy you sure this two days thing gon wuk? People gon get tired dey gon Rabacca. Watch is after 12:00 o'clock, 1:00 o'clock we leave Rabacca, how you gon go back on the road"?

Do not bother with them man. When we started assembling at the Party Headquarters and it came to about 1:45 p.m. there was a sizeable crowd there and the supporters started to say, "General Secretary time to go on the streets". I said this has nothing to do with time, it has something to do with the crowd when we get the crowd we are going on the road; so sit down and wait until the political leader give the order to go on the road. Hold your forth we are coming. Mr. Speaker, when we hit the road, they can call it mass band, they can call it Monday mass whatever they want to call it, Tuesday mass, Monday mass, night mass and afternoon mass there is not another event on the streets of Kingstown that has been more impressive than the march on the 28 March. [Applause] Even Skinny Fabulous said, "Boy whey alyuh get that from boy; mek sure you organise something like that fu me, the next time ah perform in St Vincent". I said fine man, just pay me the right money and I am going to help you [Laughter] because I have to pay him to perform so if I am going to do something for him he has to pay me to perform. So, Mr. Speaker, we have brought the troops out and we have shown them on the road and in the wisdom of the political leader, I mean I was advising let us bring the troops here at the parliament, the political leader said, "No! We are not bringing them at the Parliament". We have been consistently been asking our supporters to stay at home when the NDP comes out to protest and there is wisdom in it and I take my hat off to him. That is why he is political leader and I am General Secretary and I will never be political leader and he will never be General Secretary but it worked because our soldiers were straining at the leashes, they were barking they were ready to go. And when they came on the streets; I am not surprised that the NDP those who had a little spunk in them have lost that spunk. And outside today is another dismal failure by the New Democratic Party to try and reverse a process that the people have voted for overwhelmingly in four consecutive elections [Applause] to keep the Unity Labour Party in government; because I counted 1998 as one not taking it off my diary. My mathematics told me that we got the majority votes on four consecutive elections.

Mr. Speaker, what have we been doing apart from showing that we are the strongest political party in St Vincent and the Grenadines? They say that Milton Cato said he had the strongest government and he lost election. Eventually the strongest government in the world does lose election. But I told them that they were the closest to winning in 2010; and they will never see that chance again; never. And their own supporters are telling them that, their best chance of winning the election was in 2010, they throw it away and they will never see that opportunity again. They are a Party which had fifteen seats at one time, they controlled the whole parliament but their day of reckoning came because of wisdom, strategic planning and a proper political leadership that took us into the government and kept us there and will continue to keep us there. [Applause]

Mr. Speaker, I listened to Honourable Senator David Browne speaking on the achievements of this administration. Mr. Speaker, if it is one thing that we take seriously in this political party is our manifesto, we

spend a lot of money preparing it and that is why it is the most beautiful looking manifesto in the entire region. [Applause] Everybody in the region is jealous when they see this document comes out, the content is as beautiful as the glossy nature of it and I want to refer back to the following pages, Mr. Speaker, because we have made a commitment to the people of this country. And that is why we are still in government because we deliver the goods to the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and they are pleased. We get distinction, starting from delivering to you hundreds of projects starting on page 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18 and then we go into some other projects may I remind you that if you make the NDP win these are the projects they are going to turn back. And that carry from Argyle International Airport, Cross Country Road, Education Revolution, Petro Caribe Agreement, the Medical Assistance Programme, the National Stadium Project, the low income and no income homes is something I want to spend a little time on; the Youth Empowerment Service, these are projects they will turn back and that stretches into page 20.

So, Mr. Speaker, when we do this you would remember when we came to this parliament every single time that we would have won an election, the Leader of the House, the Honourable Prime Minister lays the Manifesto of the Unity Labour Party as a document of the House because we consider the contract between the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines and the organisation called the Unity Labour Party and that is why continuously we get the majority support in St Vincent. I mean they are stripping Kingsley De Freitas to pieces because Kingsley said that he has gone through the 2001 Manifesto of the Unity Labour Party and the 2005 Manifesto of the Unity Labour Party and he has given them a pass mark on both occasions. They want to strip Kingsley down to a dog, so it is only Kingsley thick skin that keeps him there supporting the New Democratic Party.

And the Honourable Senator David Browne was talking about library development, Mr. Speaker, it is really something that you cannot forgive the New Democratic Party for. That library building that we have, Mr. Speaker, was given to us, under the New Democratic Party, we took it and leased it out to the French for 25 years for 30 pieces of silver and from there they leased a storeroom in Middle Street belonging to one of their big supporters the De Freitas family, I am in that family circle so I can speak of it openly. And as Glen Jackson once described it: "As a library across the road from a rum shop", and that is where our children were punished until last year when we opened our National Library at Murray's Road. I happened to have given the Ministry of Works when we took the administration in 2001 and my Ministry was pivotal in the launching of that project all the peripheral projects that had to be done prior to getting that ready. Do not forget that what we met there was the old wire hut, there was the Technical School, we had to first relocate those and we did so successfully in the term of office and that is why we now have a beautiful building overlooking the City. Where they were before they were hidden in a valley, now we have elevated them to the top of the mountain [Applause] and they have a beautiful well managed Day Care Center up there.

The Technical College based on arrangements made with the Anglican Church who generously gave us the land down there at a pepper corn rent nominal rent for the government to build the Technical Center and that is there functioning. We had to move those out first before we build the library and before the end of two terms we were able to complete all those things, and have a functioning brand new National Library; state of the art. But I do not know if you all will recall that after the NDP as getting a lot of pressure for placing the Library in the Middle Street, they bought another De Freitas building, the one that housed Joachim garage, because the Joachim who then owned it was and still is married to a De Freitas who is the sister of Marcus and Dougie De

Freitas. They bought that building I believe to just about \$3 million they say to put the library, but what did they do they leased it out to Courts to have a showroom. That is the record of the New Democratic Party and library development you know. Courts paint it up in Courts colour very close to the colours of the NDP: yellow and they occupy that building keeping hire purchase stuff inside a building that the children of this country wanted as a library. This ULP took the building, spent \$400,000 on it and made it the headquarters of the Housing and Land Development Corporation; [Applause] a corporation that was closed by the New Democratic Party.

James Mitchell had said as the political leader then and Prime Minister: “If you want to build house, go borrow money and build your house, we do not need any Housing and Land Development Corporation”; they closed it. When I took over it was already passed that Housing and Land Development Corporation was closed, we the Unity Labour Party resurrected the Housing and Land Development Corporation. [Applause] And we introduced what is called and still popularly called today the Low Income Housing Programme; where at the peak of the first term we were employing over 875 artisans, contractors and builders, water carriers, timekeepers and truck drivers 875 persons directly employed not talking about the private truckers with their footmen and so on and what not. Today we have built over 700 low income homes [Applause] the same corporation that the New Democratic Party had closed and said that they were not going into housing; if the people want house let them build their own house.

Mr. Speaker, with the help of President Chavez and I am glad when they lambaste people like Chavez because I believe when they lambaste him he thinks more of us favourably. So, I do not mind them pounding Chavez and Libya and all them fellas: you know. They say that Libya is a bad word today but that is not for today’s debate because President Chavez of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has been good to this country. [Applause] He gave us \$9 million by way of Grant because one of the challenges of the low income homes we had established hallmark levels because we were building subsidised houses. Imagine in the ‘hey day’ of the first term, you were getting a three bedroom house on 5,000 sq ft of land for EC\$82,000; \$82,000. There was a 25 percent discuss subsidy on the construction this is what this government is about you know.

So, they can call us leftist, they can call us whatever they want; the programme of this Labour administration is for the poorer people [Applause] and to help them develop, people who cannot help themselves. What the people who can help themselves want security, protection for their business, creating the paths for future investment and bigger investment helping make sure that these businesses continue to be creditworthy and profitable but there is a class of people in this country who we have to look out for, and those who are doing well have to help those who are catching hell. So, the programmes of the Unity Labour Party in areas of education, health, housing naturally the priority will be in the areas for that group of persons who cannot help themselves without help from other people. [Applause]

I do not think there is anybody in St Vincent who is against the Unity Labour Party for that but yet you will hear them describe it as communist; well Comrade, Mr. Speaker, if that is communism, I am staying with it. I am not communist but if that is what they describe as communism, I am going to keep it because what I have seen in this country as the majority support for the Unity Labour Party confirms to me that we are on the right track. [Applause] And I am warning them, I want to warn them about this: those who defected in the last election who previously supported the Unity Labour Party - Some who supported us had to go and support them for them to

get the number of votes they got eh; there is no question in my mind about it. But there is a majority of those persons who went over because of the stupidity and this useless action that is going on, on the street, those persons will reverse their support in the next general elections. There is no question in my mind about it that is why I am telling them that their best bet to win the election was 2010; they will never get another chance as easy as that one, they had so much to campaign on.

You had a lead of over 10,000, 9,000 votes and you still come back and lose the election because I could understand the feeling you know. I could understand the feeling having decided well look I am going to be Press Secretary to the Prime Minister, I am going to be in charge of the Fisheries Complex in Owia, I am going to be Chairman of the National Commercial Bank, I am going to be this, I am going to be that and by 8:30 the night of the 13 December, all those dreams vanished into thin air. I mean I could understand the deep hurt and the feeling inside of the breast and the chest of the New Democratic Party and their supporters.

Mr. Speaker, the story is told of the Alcolado and the smelling salts; but I can understand the desperation that is in that camp right now, to reverse a third term that they knew had they approached it differently they may have won, and they want to beat themselves on the back for it but they have to sit back and protest and protest and protest. I do not know where they are going to get their resources to last five years but I wish them well and I trust that in their protestation that they will keep the peace in St Vincent and the Grenadines. I want to say that it is the example that we set on March 28, you know, we decide to come in town to show them how to make protest, we protested in support of our government, we came out to show support, we could have rampage the street and curse all the NDP people them who were lined up on the sidewalk watching us because you could have seen the difference in the faces eh. Those who were NDP, their faces [showing action] string down so and those who support the Unity Labour Party were hands in the air and smiling; but we did not do then anything, the police gave us certain conditions and we followed that route. One lane let traffic flow fast; we kept them on one lane, let the traffic pass.

I told the supporters, let the traffic pass because I want everybody to see how big this march be, if you block up the whole road they cannot pass and see it you have to take helicopter to see it but once you can pass by the march they will be more impressed with what they see on the ground. And so our supporters did. I told them when I saw them straggling, Mr. Speaker, I had the megaphone and I said, do not touch that yellow line [Knocking on the desk] I said remember which colour that is if you touch it you turn NDP [Laughter] they stayed on that side of the yellow line, Mr. Speaker. I was just talking of the paint that is in the road where they divide the road the yellow lines; you know it is a yellow line. The traffic to keep the lanes, so I wanted to make sure that that yellow line was not to be touched and to keep on the left side of the lane not the wrong side but the left side.

Mr. Speaker, this Unity Labour Party has delivered to the people under trying circumstances. No other administration has had the hardships of this administration internationally, regionally and locally; none, apart from 1979 Soufriere, but we have delivered to the people. Mr. Speaker, if we had the glory days of the New Democratic Party when ... [Interjection] no I am not talking banana, when oil prices were at the levels that they were at under the majority of the years of the New Democratic Party, less than \$30 a barrel. It peaked with us at \$149 per barrel, but here we are still in government after so long; it shows that we have performed to the

satisfaction of the majority of Vincentians [Knocking on the desk] Mr. Speaker that is my driving force you know.

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

**HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS:** Thank you very much Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't go beyond that because I need to leave town at 1:00 o'clock

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Right, well then you have five minutes.

**HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS:** [Laughs] I have five minutes, Mr. Speaker, I will wrap up now, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not have the time to go into the wealth creation and the poverty reduction that we have carried, I will just say this as a global statement on this anybody who has been out of St Vincent from 2000 and come back in 2010 would honestly remark that this country has grown in great proportions [Applause] The physical layout the physical infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, it is obvious even today, I am surprised that all these fast foods want to come into St Vincent in an economy that the NDP says is so bad. Why are they coming, something got to be good down here? I mean these fast foods outlet come out of the United States they do all their market research studies. There are many of them inside of the NDP who know more market study than anybody else, every day they are on the radio they are the most advanced and the most learned person, they even quarrel with lawyers on the law. They doubt lawyers when lawyers give an opinion; they are themselves lawyers they have not even been to law school, they have not even been to university and they have not even read a law book.

They read a lot of excerpts from people all over the place what you call 'brief ketch' that is what they do. We use to say it in primary school, you 'brief ketch'. But you have all these fast foods coming and Mr. Speaker, when you took office in 2001 the count on vehicles in St Vincent at December 2000 was 8,000. You would not believe it; 8,000 vehicles were licensed there, today was over 25,000 vehicles on the road where is that wealth coming from? Yes the people borrow money, you cannot borrow money less you have money; nobody lends you money to buy motor car unless you can pay for it. Naturally some vehicles are sold by the bank like some houses are sold by the bank because people have fallen into bad situations but generally an increase from eight to twenty five, seventeen thousand vehicles; I mean something has to be happening right in St Vincent. And Mr. Speaker, I am saying that the thing that is happening right is the Unity Labour Party that is in government in this country.

I want to close by saying, Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the troops, the supporters, the red ants, the Labour hogs whatever you want to call them. I extend my congratulations to them for supporting this Unity Labour Party for the last ten years and beyond because they supported us from 1994 when we took the first three seats and I am saying keep your support high because 2015 is coming and we want that victory as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker [Applause]

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable Member for Marriaqua, Minister of Education.

**HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL:** Mr. Speaker, it seems that it is a good time for us to take a little break for lunch hence I beg to move the suspension until 3:00 p.m.

**House suspended at 1:00 p.m. for lunch**  
**House resumed at 3:10 p.m.**

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Pray be seated this Honourable House resumes its debate on the Motion that is set before us, motion on performance on the ULP government and I recognise the Senator Elvis Charles. I just want to remind Members that at 5:00 o'clock we will end the debate on this Private Member Motion and you have 45 minutes at least, at most I should say.

**HONOURABLE ELVIS CHARLES:** Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I too rise to commend the Unity Labour Party on its governance of St Vincent and the Grenadines over the last ten years. Mr. Speaker, I always compare the ULP to a batsman who made his test debut on a difficult wicket, and after applying good judgement, patience and sound technique was able to score a century. [Applause] Mr. Speaker, as a cricketer I can tell you that is the innings the spectators and most of your fans remember throughout your career. Mr. Speaker, when the ULP took office in 2001 there was a radical shift in our education system; radical that is the reason we term it the Education Revolution, things were not done in the same manner. Mr. Speaker, the quality and quantity of education was improved and this was done in a systematic manner that shows order that shows a sense of purpose.

I remember quite well that every learning institution in this country was refurbished; giving the kind of colour that would stimulate students to learn. I remember all the excitement that created because we had never seen that before where a government repaired or refurbished every learning institution during its first term [Applause] Mr. Speaker, that is great achievement. Mr. Speaker, prior to 2001 when students who attended primary school failed the Common Entrance Examinations many of them were placed on the back burner, many of them became the castaways of society. They were not given that opportunity to enter a secondary school. Many sound minds were wasted, talents were wasted. Mr. Speaker, I said that because when I attended school because my parents were focused they were poor but focused. I can remember my father saying when he was drunk, what he did not get he wanted his children to get. [Applause] And we were beaten; he had no room for failure so we had to come good.

But I remember many of my friends having to drop out of school and it was only Saturday I was in Biabou and looked at some of them, we shared jokes together and I said if they only had the opportunity they could have been so good, but the ULP has given each student the opportunity to enter secondary school and that is marvellous. Mr. Speaker, even though students fail the playing field has been levelled where each child is given the opportunity to walk through the doors of a secondary institution [Applause] Mr. Speaker, that is achievement and I can say that when they enter secondary school children look forward with a new sense of optimism that they are going to achieve what their other friends achieved regardless of the social strata in our society.

Mr. Speaker, it is marvelous that poor parents who have no money whatsoever to send their children to schools of higher learning can approach the ULP and be sent to universities to learn with children who are more fortunate financially. Mr. Speaker, I wish I was born during that time as a young child. Mr. Speaker, in fact, I always say to my two daughters that things have become so good that they have no excuse for not doing good in school. And I remember one said to me “Daddy you wait until you are forty to get Masters”. What she was saying in a subtle way was that I was old; I achieved it when I was old but that is the reason why I sent her to school and I said to her things are much better now so you have no reason why you cannot get your Masters in your twenties and that is made possible by this great Party [Applause]

Mr. Speaker, I said things were done in a systematic way; provisions are made for the preschoolers, for those in primary school, for those in secondary school, for those who enter universities. And I was heartened to hear that at Cave Hill that St Vincent and the Grenadines has the most students in that institution after Barbados; marvellous achievement, Mr. Speaker. [Applause] So sometimes it hurts me when I hear people of different political persuasion saying that the ULP has not done anything. Mr. Speaker, that is shortsightedness it hurts to the bone when I hear those statements. Mr. Speaker, during the ULP’s ten years it is nearly averaging a school per a year. I like to look at averages when you tell me about a batsman I peep at his average, do not tell me that he has talent and after 50-60 test matches he has 20 as an average. I will say you have talent but that is all. The ULP has an average that we can boast about when it comes to building schools in this country. And I can tell you education empowers you; education helps you to get higher paying jobs, education lifts your self esteem and Mr. Speaker, you only have to look at the students today, to me there is a marked difference in their behavior and attitude. You can see a new sense of hope among these children, they speak with more pride, they speak with more confidence and I believe because they are more educated.

Mr. Speaker, our leader has a vision that I admire, if you educate a child he will become independent, you educate a child he would not be a burden throughout life because he is going to provide for himself and I am really happy to be a part of this Party with a leader who is so assertive, brave and intelligent. Mr. Speaker, I will have to be extremely dull so that something would not rub off on me; I am really happy to be a part of this Party. Mr. Speaker, the whole education activity is all encompassing, if you look down in the Grenadines, they have a history of not voting for the ULP but still some of the best schools were built in Bequia and in Union Island. [Applause] And whenever I get into arguments, Mr. Speaker, I like to remind them about these things, how come you say that a government does not care for you when that government is building the best institution that you can go to in your island. For seventeen years the NDP had that chance, they did not build any structure that looks so impressive; so that is the reason why I can stand here today, Mr. Speaker, and talk about achievement and know fully well that I am not exaggerating because the record is there to show.

Mr. Speaker, a country without natural resources, we do not have oil, gold, copper or diamond but still we are able to spend so much money to educate and train everyone, students on a whole we are talking about, even the adults who have left secondary schools. And when I looked at the notes, I saw that in ten years the ULP has spent about \$1.5 billion on education and to me that is a remarkable achievement. And one of the things I look at is the laptops. I remember when the Prime Minister spoke about that they said that it was a political gimmick; how can a man beg for 30,000 laptops? To me it sounded far fetched but I have seen it today, I have seen the laptops and I know the Prime Minister can back his mouth and I am happy that those who said that it was a

political gimmick they are stultified right now. According to one mentally challenged person who said, “They shock and frightened”. I saw them so I can boast about them. The teaching-learning situation can only become easier and teachers have already started their training process to help children to use these laptops, help them to access information easier, Mr. Speaker, I am happy.

I have been a teacher for over 25 years and I know that there are teachers who are happy just as I am that here they have a tool that can help the teaching and learning situation to be much easier and Mr. Speaker that is great achievement. Two teachers met me this week and they were annoyed that they were not appointed as graduates in the primary school and I said patience, they could not see from my angle because they are saying, “Elvis you are there, you are in parliament and you are not sticking up for us, how come two of us could not be appointed when we did our first degree with you”. Again we overuse words, I said have some patience, little did they realise that in 2001 only four teachers could have boasted about university degree you know, and they behave as though they were the landlords in school. They were bright like bulb, today over four hundred teachers in the primary institution have degrees [Applause] Mr. Speaker, each person now feels as though he is the Principal. And I will show you how the whole process has become easier. Whenever a Principal steps out to attend a function in Kingstown or anywhere, any teacher can now step up to the plate and be in charge of the school and keep everything under control until he comes back. Long ago it was not so, Mr. Speaker, but because of education and training the bar has been lifted, teachers feel more confident, they go to their classroom with more bounce and with more enthusiasm because they are well learned and they are well trained. [Applause]

Mr. Speaker, I want parents to know that at Argyle they have made provisions for children who are in the preschool where parents can now take their children to the school as early as 7:00 o’clock and go off to their jobs and know that their children are well taken care of. The transition is much easier; these children by learning to socialize by playing with each other, when the time comes for them to move to the next level, to the primary level and to the elementary level things are so different: it is a smooth transition. Mr. Speaker that tells me that things are not done in an ad hoc way in the ULP government and I said so before, it is true. There is order, there is a sense of purpose, there is progression and I can speak that way because I have been teaching for over two decades, so I know what it was then and what it is now.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk something here about health and wellness and it is a good thing that parliamentarians we are trying to lead the way, in fact we are going to the Gym now. So, who never pumped iron before, everybody pumping iron. [Applause] [Laughter] And I can tell you that in order for a person to grab education with both hands and to learn at the maximum he must be healthy. Again I am trying to point out here that things are done in order and with a sense of purpose, if you are to learn you must be healthy and this government has spent so much money and taking care of our health and I will show you why. Because if about 21 clinics are being repaired, they have built four new one or I should say we have built 4 new ones because I am in it since December 13. [Laughter] I heard one Member of the opposition said, “Whey Elvis Charles know, look who moving motion”? [Laughter] I said I am in it since December 13; it will go down in history: I am a parliamentarian [Knocking on the desk]

**HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON:** The Constitution allows that.

**HONOURABLE ELVIS CHARLES:** And it hurt me last night and I said take that I am a parliamentarian, I can tell my grandchildren and children about it.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to health the Honourable Frederick Stephenson likes to boast about the polyclinic out in Stubbs, yes it is in his constituency and I am looking forward to the day when Central Kingstown and I always talk about Sharpes and the Green Hill people would not journey down to Kingstown in the wee hours of the morning to hold up doors or to mark spot, we are going to have our own clinic. I am confident that it would happen. Mr. Speaker, I would tell you a modern polyclinic at Stubbs and not only that I took about 40 children from the Bethel High School and 3 teachers out to Georgetown to show them the Modern Medical Center there, and I remember when one teacher said to me, "*But me nah know dem a bil this out yah*". I said where you are living? She did not know. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the day when those people who have renal failure can take a bus ride go to Georgetown, get their treatment and go back to their homes without going overseas. Mr. Speaker, that is achievement and many of us we have become so complacent that we overlook that.

So, when they say that this government does not do anything for health, again it hurts because I am seeing it. There is physical evidence to show but yet some of us choose to be blind. I always say we become shortsighted. Mr. Speaker, I remember when we heard about HIV/AIDS, we turned our noses at those persons who had contracted the virus, we were afraid to touch them or even to be in their company, thinking that even their sweat or the air they breathe has virus in it and we will become infected but I think the ULP has done remarkably well to educate people about this disease and to reduce the number of persons yearly who contract the HIV virus. And Mr. Speaker, it is no longer that cause for alarm again even though we still have to be careful but the ULP has done much in trying to educate Vincentians about this dreaded disease. It was only a couple of weeks ago when the CT scan machine was brought to St Vincent and the Grenadines. Some people would say but why you need a CT scan machine, but do you know that so many who needed the service of that machine had to travel overseas and I remember some people coming to me even while I was up in my office asking for assistance to go overseas to do scans and all of that.

But Mr. Speaker, it is a blessing that our country now has its own machine that would be up and running shortly and we can look at that again as a marvellous achievement. [Knocking on the desk]

Mr. Speaker, we have become so concerned about our eating habits, even in schools this government has started that programme where we are trying to educate children as to the healthy foods they should eat. I remember one time when some vendors got very angry and said that the ULP wanted to stop them from making money because they were selling some foods that we thought were undesirable; that were not healthy for our children. But even today Mr. Speaker, they too are becoming educated and they are trying to help out the situation and I feel happy for that.

Mr. Speaker, we talked about water, the delivery of water to our homes, it is on record that when the ULP took office about 70 percent Vincentians had pipe borne water to their homes, now today we can boast of about 98 percent. And Mr. Speaker, we have to applaud the ULP for that. [Applause] We must. I can remember quite well where I am from up in Biabou, we call up in that area the ghetto, so when a men says, "We going up in the

ghetto”, they come up where we live old pasture. Mr. Speaker, I know about river stone you know, the Honourable Saboto Caesar likes to talk about these things but I know about river stone, I had my own stone *ah river*. I am not afraid to talk of it you know. When I got married and came to live in Kingstown current reach up in the ghetto, so I never knew what it was to drink cold water from a fridge in the ghetto. I never studied using electricity in the ghetto. When I built my own home I can now sit down and study at any hour in the night.

These are things that I look back at and it is not until the ULP took office that we had all that improvement up in the ghetto. We had our own road concrete: the beach could talk about that; the Honourable Frederick Stephenson can talk about that because he knows where I came from; you had to walk with two boots when it rains. He knows about that; and wet cloth to wipe you off when you came down the road. And there was a standpipe just outside our gate, every boy in the ghetto had his spot with the lard bucket, we bathe there. But now, Mr. Speaker, nearly every home in St Vincent has pipe borne water that is great; [Applause] that is great; that is great. Some people say you never miss the water until the Well run dry anytime water goes in the area then you hear people, you feel it because we take things for granted. Mr. Speaker, we are accustomed to living comfortable we take things for granted not taking time off to stop and look back from whence we came.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the ULP for the garbage collection system every Thursday in Green Hill where I live the garbage truck comes along so it has become a part of us now that every Thursday every family starts running with the garbage to place by the side of the road, you know that a truck is going to come to collect your garbage. Mr. Speaker, we have to look at these things; no longer do we see garbage lying idly by the side of the road that was common in years gone by and Mr. Speaker, when I am exchanging ideas with people from the opposite Party I like to talk about these things, a rat and cock roach use to be playing football at the side of the road because there used to be so much garbage here and there but now things are better. When you go church you hear that things are getting better. I know that chorus, Mr. Speaker, and that is the reason why I will always say that the ULP in ten years has achieved so much and we are taking it for granted. Every year we expect some new innovation, some new thing from the ULP because this Party has lifted us to a level that has even made some of us complacent.

Mr. Speaker, in regards to health again we are talking here about the number of young people who go off to study in places like Cuba to be doctors, dentist, pharmacists and nurses. Mr. Speaker, I fell from my back wall behind my house just before election, I regained consciousness at the hospital. The Honourable Dr Slater came there and peep at me, I saw two young girls in jeans by the side of my bed and I thought they had come to see me when I regained consciousness, they said they were doctors; little girls, young girls and I said we are accustomed to doctors in my time you had to be an old well aged man with a big beard or grey hair

**HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER:** With an Indian name.

**HONOURABLE ELVIS CHARLES:** Ram Singh or Ramsamooj or Rou [Laughter] but now we have doctors: Daniel, Johnson, Roberts, Miguel and the fisherman daughter there De Freitas. [Applause] Mr. Speaker, these are things you know they may sound like joke but these are things I like to clap about. It shows here that we are training our own people; that this government is taking care of the human resources of this country and we can only become better, our standard of living can only become better. And the more we keep the ULP in office the

better St Vincent and the Grenadines will be [Applause] Mr. Speaker, I did not love ULP yesterday you know, when I look at the policies they have and I see the way they do things in a systematic manner, I say this is a Party with a leader that has vision. These are parliamentarians with vision and I made up my mind, I said I want to be a part of that and here I am today, Mr. Speaker, I really love this Party, I love this Party. In fact it was yesterday while I was arguing with some of my colleagues on the block, I said to them if they are to take away say that I am not a Senator anymore and send me back to the classroom I will still vote for the ULP because I love the policies, I love the things I see. [Knocking on desk]

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about our water system, I spoke about it a short while ago; there has been a massive expansion in the water system in this country and let me just quote some:-

**“The ULP completed the Dallaway Water Project. They started and completed the Windward Water Project at a cost of EC \$23 million. They started and completed the new Water Plant at Majorca”.**

And we are talking here about significant delivery of water to the Grenadines, to Bequia and to Union Island where storage capacity was improved; where monies were spent to build storage in those countries. Mr. Speaker, I remember the Prime Minister saying that during the time when we had the drought, when St Lucia was experiencing problems get water, when Trinidad experience problem St Vincent and the Grenadines had water to even ship off to some of these countries, we were never affected in that way because we put the proper structure in place to develop our water system. [Knocking on desk] Mr. Speaker, when we talk about achievement we have to talk about that a little country and I like to say without natural resources and without much money with a leader with a big heart who is brave. I always call him brave, assertive and with a team who is willing to learn. Mr. Speaker, we have achieved much in ten years.

I will go on to say even at Kelbourney, I heard the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister talking about Kelbourney, a storage tank was built there in Layou; you had pipe lines being laid at Layou to alleviate the water problem in that area. Mr. Speaker, we had to look at these things collectively and realise that each was not done in an isolated way but there was a systematic plan. There was development, there was thinking, and everything was done here with a sense of purpose.

Those people who were over 65 years and who are on public assistance, this government has taken away the charge, the meter charge from their water bill. Mr. Speaker, that means much to them you know because I always say to my own children you do not know poverty because you were born when there are choices. You were born in a home where you have choices, but there are people who find it difficult to live. There are people who are poor and I try to rub that in to give them a sense that there are people who suffer so things that you take for granted there are others who would rejoice when they have their little blessing. Mr. Speaker, this government is like a cricket team scoring well above the asking rate in a one day match, so when I hear people on the other side; I like to say people, and they say that this government has done nothing, Mr. Speaker, it hurts, and I am going to talk about something that I am very proud of, our housing stock.

They said that the government built match boxes things that were small and uncomfortable, in Green Hill where I have built my home since 1995 and I heard member of the opposition on his radio programme last night, I was called and told about a comment he made: Elvis Charles has not achieved anything in life and David Browne cannot even say Humpty Dumpty and I said the house that I live in I built it in 1995, since 1995; I bought several vehicles since 1995. So, I have not achieved anything but I am proud of the houses that this government has built. Go up to Lofty Heights in Green Hill come up my way, come up to the Fenton Trail and I will take you out to Lofty Heights and I will show you fine Houses. I will take you down to Peter's Hope and we are going to go at that corner where could look over the sea going down to Barrouallie and when you look back, you see beauty, absolute beauty, Mr. Speaker. Go up to Byera again you will see improvement there in our housing stock and Mr. Speaker; those houses were not there before 2001. Every person who comes to my office would ask: "*When alyuh gon build house again*"? They look forward to owning their own homes, they have hope, hope was not given to them by the NDP because they tried at it and they failed miserably. And this government is continuing to build homes to assist those who find it difficult owning their own homes. And that is vision, that is achievement over 700 we call them low income.

What about the no income homes? Mr. Speaker, there are people who are getting houses for free where you ever hear that? That did not happen before 2001, maybe some Ministers. The Vincentians are getting houses for free, no income homes. And I feel happy when we can go down to the NCB now the Bank of St Vincent and the Grenadines and get 100 percent mortgage for our homes. Mr. Speaker, we should not take these things for granted you know, I said to teachers, this is the time, because I always speak about teaching, this is the time to own your own homes; things are getting better Mr. Speaker. And when they tell me that things are so hard they cannot go down to the bank and access loans, I say you have other problems: you had other problems, 100 percent mortgage; I wish I had that in my time. Mr. Speaker, that is worthy of note, and not only that those builders who are involved in building housing projects, housing estate they get tax concessions. This government has made it possible for them to get things at cheaper prices so when they bring import stuff from overseas, Mr. Speaker, they get concessions so we can buy houses for less money. Mr. Speaker, this sounds like fairy tales sometimes I talk with a childish passion because I am excited when I see these things happening and that is the reason why sometimes I sit at home and I say that why should they vote another Party. Sometimes I get angry because this Party has done so much.

The Housing and Land Development Corporation, how many people [Applause] have gone down to the Housing and Land Development Corporation and boasted about getting material for their own homes, Mr. Speaker? Mr. Speaker, that is lovely, the poor and the needy have hope and I always say I would always support a government who gives me hope.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Member you have 10 minutes.

**HONOURABLE ELVIS CHARLES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I heard about lands being sold at 10 cents a sq ft. so those in informal settlements are now looking forward to owning their own lands getting titles: 10 cents a sq ft Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, even two of my constituents came to me and they said that they want me to speak to the Prime Minister they bought lands for higher prices in their day and there are some people who are owning lands, the same lands in the same area for cheaper and they want me to ask him to

refund them the money. Mr. Speaker, do you know that is happening; this ULP government is refunding people who bought lands at higher prices. Mr. Speaker, it is unbelievable but it is true.

I want to touch briefly here on the youths and the elderly, Mr. Speaker. I speak of the elderly with a passion because my father died a couple of years ago at age 91, mommy is about 80 and uncle died at age 87, and aunt died at age 88 so I believe the Charles have a streak in them to live a little long, so that is they reason why I feel confident that I too would live to 90. I feel confident, Mr. Speaker. [Interjection] [Laughter] The elderly in this country have been remembered by this [Applause] government and I will show you how. Mr. Speaker, since 2001 the number of elderly have increased on the non-contributory schemes at the NIS. Mr. Speaker, more elderly are on the Public Assistance Programme and I do not want to talk here about more elderly; I am talking about the leap the significant improvement in the contributions that they get from \$50 in 2001, now they are getting over \$250 as public assistance. I remember when we had our convention at Marriaqua, when I gave an old lady a ride and she was speaking as though – I say this lady is old she may look insignificant but she has some wisdom, she was saying things that made me glance at her in the rear view mirror and when she reached the convention I realised she was one called Jenny and I listened to Jenny say that when she got her increase in public assistance this year, when they came and they offer her small fish she said, “*Nah me nah eat small fish: slice fish dolphin*”. [Laughter] She could buy big fish now. Mr. Speaker, some of us take this public assistance thing for a joke you know but it means a lot for those elderly who cannot work and who have children who have deserted them or who have gone on.

Mr. Speaker, we have to remember this is achievement, so when two people who live in Green Hill two elderly said, “We could do without the money”, and I see that they are struggling I had to remind each to think again. “*And he ah fu gimme de money because ah we taxpayers money*”. But the other Party did not give them and they had things better in their day. Mr. Speaker, we are living in more challenging times and this government is able to deliver so much and that is the reason why from the bottom of my heart I will say that this government is you know we are scoring well above the asking rate.

Mr. Speaker, the Home Help for the elderly. Many people find their grandfathers and mothers when they have become aged as burdens. And what has this government done? Employed Helpers to go around to homes: to help to clean; to bathe; to comb these people hair, and to make them feel that they are wanted in a society [Applause] Mr. Speaker that his achievement and I am going to talk about it, I am going to trumpet these things; that is achievement. The Lewis Punnett Home or the Poor Home as we use to say was renovated under this government and do not talk about the Golden Years Centre where they can go now congregate as if they are going to school, share jokes and have happy moments. Play with each other and catch up on old times. Mr. Speaker that is achievement because I intend to live until I am old and I do not know you never know what may happen to you. So, with these establishments Mr. Speaker, I too may benefit from these institutions, play domino with my old brethren and share jokes about 19 how much and how much. [Laughter]

Mr. Speaker, I am going to wrap up here by saying that in order to deal with disaster preparation this government established NEMO and that was clearly seen during the passage of Tomas when everyone became – some of us became disoriented and scared and anxious our roofs were gone galvanize went flying off and many people came to me crying; NEMO the worker at NEMO they were able to help. Mr. Speaker that is

achievement there is an institution, there is a modern building built just around block 2000 gap where we can now go and talk to the officials whenever we have problems, whenever there are disasters and Mr. Speaker, I thank this government, I applaud this government and I am looking forward to 2015, Mr. Speaker, when more people would become educated and they have listened here today and know the reasons why they should vote for the ULP. Mr. Speaker, much obliged. [Applause]

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs, Senator Slater.

**HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to contribute ...

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Just a minute, Honourable Member, please, just take a seat for a short while. I think we have some distortion in the system there, if you can kindly clear up there for us. I picked it up during the time the Honourable Elvis speaking and now I have just heard it again with Senator Slater. [Addressing the technicians] You have cleared it up, is it all right now? Okay all right.

**HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to contribute to the debate on this motion because it is difficult for me to be here and not participate in the celebration of the many achievements of our Party over the past 10 years. I am proud to have been associated with this Party and share the joy of achievements my other colleagues have debated earlier. Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that the citizens of this country understand why we are celebrating. We are celebrating because there are many reasons for us to celebrate if one is to be objective. and we all should be. We ought to remember where we were up to 2001 and I hear the word complacency mentioned several times and yes I think we often tend to forget progress when it becomes easy and so natural. We tend not to remember when things were not as good. And if we do that then we may not understand why we are celebrating, but I think it is important that we remember where we were.

Mr. Speaker, the previous speakers have been very detailed and I only hope to try my best to fill in on some of these areas. I have been honoured to have served this for the first nine years of our governance of Ministry of Health and the Environment and I know that that portfolio is one that is always under spectroscopy and the microscope and all sorts of scopes. It is one that I tell my colleague who is now Minister of Health and the Environment that I wish him well and I will be there to help you but I serve with pride. But Mr. Speaker, I served this country before I was a Minister and I knew the problems in Ministry of Health because I serve in a senior capacity there and it is partly because of that that I was able to understand the problems and with the help of a very solid staff, I think it is fair to say that I was able to resolve a lot of the problems with the support of this government.

Mr. Speaker, health is a service that requires a lot of resources, human resources, material resources including equipment and you have to deliver a lot of services, supplies etcetera. Mr. Speaker, in human resources we must remember when we got in office in 2001, in fact one of the things we campaigned on was that the human resource that probably was the single most important group, the nursing staff was in a serious crisis, it was a global, regional and national crisis. Nurses were leaving because of harsh working conditions, they were leaving for the proverbial greener pastures; it was not happening in St Vincent alone let us just not say that but it was

affecting St Vincent very badly. We campaigned and we proposed that we will do something about it and we did something about it. Mr. Speaker, we have to remember these things.

Mr. Speaker, we used our foreign policy then to deepen our ties with a friendly nation Cuba because the situation required an immediate resolution of an immediate crisis, we got 22 nurses from Cuba, we were ridiculed and we were criticized by the opposition and I was pleased two three years later when they were leaving some of them who ridicule were congratulating the service of the Cuban nurses in St Vincent and the Grenadines. Mr. Speaker, we have to remember these things but we did not stop there we decided that we must look at the global picture and we must use our resources to provide for our nationals and also look at the possibility of exporting our human resources. Mr. Speaker, I am proud today as a member of this Party and this government we have successfully delivered and we have trained enough nurses to serve our local requirements and we are now proudly exporting nurses to the region and to the international market. [Applause]

In fact, St Vincent is the only Caricom country that can boast that right now and it is because of the positive policies of this Unity Labour Party St Vincent government. Mr. Speaker, these are things that we have reason to celebrate about. Mr. Speaker, in the Ministry of Health in other human resources we have had first under this government. Mr. Speaker there is a group of doctors called pathologist and especially the officers of the law who are involved in prosecutions, you know when there is a serious case like homicide we needed to import an overseas specialist called a pathologist to give evidence; that cost taxpayers a lot of money, thousands of dollars, because we have to pay them highly, we have to pay their passage, their hotels etcetera. Right now, we never had any of our own; we now boast two in St Vincent and the Grenadines: [Applause] Dr. Child and Dr. Bernard. You see a lot of people do not know or do not understand the significance of these things, but that is the reason why we must boast of our achievements.

Mr. Speaker, as I speak during our two terms in the last two years for the first time St Vincent boasts its own Paediatric Surgeon for the first time [Applause] these things just do not happen like that; they happen because the government recognises the need, we know what is development, we work towards and we achieve. And when we achieve we must celebrate; therefore we achieve and we celebrate our achievements. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, our nurses and other health care workers have under this administration have had new opportunities for post basic training. Many of our nurses have been able to go on and do post graduate studies and it is for that reason why we can further strengthen the training of our nurses. Mr. Speaker, these things a lot of people take for granted, we must not because they require many hours of planning and many negotiations. I remember them and they were not all homogeneous. We did not think the same way all the time. I remember when we were training our nurses even the nurses were suggesting that we have to discontinue giving a stipend to the nursing students. Some of us were saying we cannot stretch it so far; some were saying let us decrease it and others including the Prime Minister said, "No not his nurses" I would not say what my position was [Laughs] but suffice to say that we decided we will continue to pay our nursing students while they were training. That is no simple achievement you know because when you move from 20 to 100 per year and you continue paying them one of the things that it was important to continue to do that one is that we were now being able to bring in a lot of students who were not previously able to come in because of less numbers and many of them were only able to study nursing because they were getting the stipend that was an attack on poverty: poverty alleviation, you see.

So, sometimes you see us do some things and you have to understand why and we have all bragging rights because we delivered. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, this government during our 10 years undertook a particular project that made Vincentians standard and quality of life improved significantly and we must not forget it because I am not hearing much about it these days; but we must remind people of it: Vision Now. [Applause] Vision Now Project was one in collaboration with our friends in Cuba again and now I am Minister of Foreign Affairs a strengthening and use of our foreign policy for our development where the Cuban government negotiation with us and later with the region decided to give a service to the region that was not there before. In fact, I remember the Prime Minister when we were developing it about how many persons we think: now patients we may have out there with these eye problems? I was the Medical Officer of Health in St Vincent for 4 years: that is head of the Director of Public Health Services and I could not answer that question because we never did a proper survey and I speculated on some numbers. I was personally shocked as a physician when the project was implemented that there were thousands of people who were literally blind, not quite blind like totally, people who had eye problems that they themselves did not know. There were people who were totally blind and you just imagine those of us who can see if you want to experience what is it to be blind for a short while, in the night when the place is really dark or light goes and you are in a strange room and you do not know where to walk that is what a blind person is.

Just imagine if you were that as several patients of St Vincent including one I recall very clearly in the first trip I walked him to the plane and when he returned we were there looking to see who was walking in back and we miss – he got into the immigration department and all of us missed him because he was walking by himself that is a miracle, Mr. Speaker these are achievements. [Applause]

Mr. Speaker, we have heard about the HIV and our response. Mr. Speaker, St Vincent was the first OECS country that established a unit for HIV here with government taxpayers' money because then a lot of people really were not bothering with it. You know what was the attitude? Man them people – because there was a believe falsely so that HIV was a disease of gay men, falsely so and there was also those who said, “Well those are those people who were promiscuous and go and have sex all about and get the disease; so government taxpayers should not really bother with them”. Yes there are people who thought so and there are still people who think so. Mr. speaker, this government decided no, they are our sisters, brothers, mothers, friends, and relatives, they are human beings and they have human rights and they must be taken care of and we did so. We were complemented by the Pan American Health Organisation and other international organisations. But we went further; I led OECS and Caricom in negotiations for Grant monies and borrowed monies. This government borrowed over \$20 million with the World Bank. We were able to use our negotiations skills again, good leadership and we must understand this because there were other countries who borrowed at higher rates.

The Prime Minister and I negotiated and eventually we got some of our monies as Grants and the rest at concessionary rates. Mr. Speaker, these are things that just do not happen so and this has resulted in HIV being under fair control now. We are treating for those who need treatment, treatment is available free of cost to the individual not to the taxpayers of course but we are taking care because I believe in governance and people must understand. Governance is a management system, there are certain responsibilities that the state has for society and it is the responsibility of government to organise, co-ordinate and deliver those services to its citizens. We manage this by collecting taxes and that is why it is important for people to pay their taxes because

our citizens require and they deserve and they demand certain social services. To get them all of us have to work together and that is why we all need to work very hard to develop our country. If we work hard personally we will earn more and we will be able to pay more taxes, more taxes would be more available for social services.

Mr. Speaker when we talk about facilities we repaired over 20, almost all of our health facilities and we built some new ones. Mr. Speaker, this was discretionary because you may say that is the job of government and that is so as I have just said, but Mr. Speaker, you may choose to do it or not do it: we choose to do it and for this we are celebrating. Mr. Speaker, this is what people must remember and understand, because when I saw the Retreat Clinic I visited it as a technocrat, I visited it and I saw bat droppings on the dressings, I saw it nobody told me, I saw it for myself. When I got into office I said, 'no we cannot have our citizens like this.' And Mr. Speaker, when we decided to build a completely new clinic it is because a definite decision was made which was discretionary and we must celebrate it. [Applause]

Mr. Speaker, I am going to go a little bit from health to - because the same thing happened with the Questelles Police Station. Mr. Speaker, our office of the law are ours, they are just citizens like us doing another job and a good job they are doing too. I could not understand how the persons responsible for their security forces could have allowed people's sons and daughters to work in the Questelles Police Station and if any officers who were there they would know what I am talking about. And I vowed if I become a representative the Finance Minister will be fed up of me telling him that they need to rebuild it. I am proud, I am happy that we have been able to build such a police station and Mr. Speaker, we have done so in other constituencies.

Mr. Speaker, some people would say well you are not supposed to spend so much money on police, why not. The people, they are our brothers and sisters but a responsibility and a very important one of any state is to ensure that the laws of the country be maintained and piece reign, because that engenders an environment of peace so that development can go on easily.

Mr. Speaker, you have heard about the polyclinic in Stubbs, again we did not have to do it but we choose to do it. Why did we choose to do it? Because we recognised that it is a very important service to respond to some of the needs of the service delivery. We hear ever so often of the congestion at the Kingstown Milton Cato Memorial Hospital at the ANE we decided from studies that we probably need to have what we call Poly Clinic Services that is almost 24 hours but a daily service at different points of the island so that would ease the pressure on the central hospital. These things do not happen just so, it requires a government that is thoughtful that knows what it is doing and is responsive to the needs of the people. You have a government led by the Unity Labour Party that is a government that has been doing it over the past ten years, we deserve to make note of it, we deserve to celebrate it and we deserve to congratulate the Unity Labour Party for a job well done. [Applause]

Mr. Speaker the Richland Park Clinic we had to move it from where it was. For years for those of you who are familiar with there the land was moving and slipping it was a risk to the staff and the clients. We took the decision to relocate it. Mr. Speaker, one decision that we made in healthcare that sometimes you mention these things and people do not think that they are important. We put air-condition in all the pharmacies in St Vincent and the Grenadines. You know what is important about that? Medication deteriorates very rapidly at room

temperature and room temperature in St Vincent and the Grenadines [inaudible] hot; we all know that. And if I may use a term from the Prime Minister parenthetically all of us remember how humid this hall used to be before it was air conditioned: that is a good point. So the strangers and for those of us can you remember? A lot of us do not remember what in here was like, we did not have cushion seats; we did not have air condition. Just imagine this hall without air condition units, you know, and we did not have drapes. And these things we take for granted but they are important while similarly, Mr. Speaker, and more probably even more importantly the pharmacies of this country were just imagine the little holes and heated. The tablets used to crumble; at one time they used to use what we call efficacy, so when you take a dose and think it is the full dose the heat over time already knock out some of the effectiveness of the medication. This was not a simple thing, it was from a decision that was very important and we must celebrate and we must celebrate and acknowledge these achievements. [Applause]

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, another important area in health that we have made some significant stride: when we just came in we started and implemented a project with the International Hospital for Children with the Rotary Club of St Vincent and the Grenadines. This project has allowed children in St Vincent to receive over \$3 million worth of treatment overseas, but you know what was interesting? The specialist who came to visit and they were visiting several islands over the years and they said, "Guess what, you know in St Vincent the medical staff, the nursing staff and the hospital is sufficiently equipped and the people are working well, we think we can reverse the process". They decided let us come, it is cheaper to because when you send patience over there you know about the cost of healthcare in North America it is hundreds of thousands sometimes. They said let us come down and Mr. Speaker, we have been successful in this project. Mr. Speaker, we are now performing in St Vincent and the Grenadines sophisticated surgery on children not only for St Vincent and the Grenadines children but for neighbouring countries. [Applause] That is an achievement to be celebrated.

Mr. Speaker, you know we must remind people of these because when people say that we have not made any progress and nothing has been done here and the healthcare service is this, and it is that; the facts show for themselves. That is why we needed to know where we were and we need to understand where we are because if we do not compare them we would not understand the progress that has been made. Mr. Speaker, in the hospital we now for the first time have a special unit for children for infants because we saw from statistics that there was an undesirable level of what we call perinatal that is around birth, mortality children dying because of infections and so on. And when we did some studies it was determine that we needed to have a separate neonatal intensive care unit: it is now present and operating and serving well in St Vincent and the Grenadines. This is the same health service you hear a lot of them talking about and running down and all these [inaudible] there is nothing more you can talk about. Time would not permit, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want us to remember here I am going now a little to the environment and energy savings. Mr. Speaker, St Vincent and the Grenadines is probably the first OECS countries and certainly one of the first Caricom countries that have decided to address the question of Green House gases in a way that was practical and desirable. Again with the help of our good friends in Cuba we decided to try and save electricity, so [inaudible] and protected the ozone layer. We had a project where we changed out from incandescent bulbs that is the older type bulbs some of the young ones like Honourable Saboto Caesar may not even remember what incandescent bulbs were like.

[Interjection] [Laughs] No! But this is important Mr. Speaker; I say it is important because when we undertook the project with the Cubans there was a lot of stupidity and ignorance spilling from the opposition side. I could not believe that there were persons on that side that even had engineering degree, who did not read obviously that the world was changing that they were saying that we have to move away from energy high energy consuming devices.

We had a project to change out the bulbs and some people tried to opposed that, Mr. Speaker, we must remember these things you know; oh yes! We must remember them. We must remember too that when we negotiated with Petro Caribe for the gas, for cheaper gas could you imagine that poor people were going to get gas cheaper and the opposition just to oppose was telling people; “Don’t use the gas it gon bun up yu pot”. For those who do chemistry cooking gas is principally a thing you call propane the formula does not change if it come from Venezuela or if it comes from America. It is a natural gas you may have some mix sometimes with butane but it does not matter where it come from, it does not understand ideology. I could remember, no we laugh at these things, but they were discouraging people from buying and those who were discouraging were buying it. [Laughter] Mr. Speaker, it is important, I believe if we were to check over the years that we have been getting this gas that is reduced we would have saved million of dollars to consumers of this country. [Applause]

That is why we must celebrate it.

When we talk about all this, this is about enhancing the quality of lives of our people. We must remember that our per capita GDP in the year 2000 and 2001 was about just over EC \$8,000 it is now in the region about \$15,000; it is almost doubled. Mr. Speaker, this is important because when you are talking about wealth creation and development of a country everywhere you go they talk about GDP (gross domestic product) it is the value of the wealth of the country goods and services. And if we met it in 2000 at \$8,000 plus or minus and it is now doubled objectively you have to agree that that has been significant improvement and if there is improvement there is cause for celebration. [Applause] It is not me who say so; it is the independent assessment, so it must be somebody who is not thinking that would say that we have not had significant notable achievements under the Unity Labour Party and we must remind people because unfortunately they have failed too many people who either do not read, they do not listen well, or who listen but they do not hear, people who do not want to accept the truth because, Mr. Speaker, as my colleague says: it pains my heart when I hear some of the things that are being said. It pains my heart when supposedly intelligent people who aspire to lead this country maliciously misinform the citizens of this country, and this must come to a stop. And they do so, so flagrantly, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes you know there are things that we find dirty to talk about and I am using the pun here: sewage collections. You know one of the problems we have here in this country especially on the tourist belt? Sewage leaking into the water we had. And there are some people who have problem with sewage and they would say; so what? It is important for health. This government recognising that; we have established a septic lagoon. So, you know it is not a nice sexy thing to talk about but it is important because now that is no longer a problem. It is easier now to suck up because you know what used to happen before the people operating the sewage disposal unit used to suck it out and dump it in the rivers and the sea. I could remember getting ear

infection out at Indian Bay from that; we have to understand that these are progress, these are things that we have done. Water supply is important and we have heard a lot about that.

Our foreign policy: a government has a responsibility to establish friends and relationships and we do so at our own discretion. We have decided that we had established relationships: traditional relationships and we aspired and we have been successful in strengthening those and deepening those relations and we have benefitted from that but we had the choice we could leave it right there. We could have left it there but we said no; that is not enough for a small developing country we have to use what we have to get what we want and we have to use our negotiating skills. To do so internationally means we have to explore new frontiers and therefore we did so in our foreign policy. So we established relations in many new countries and reinvigorated relationships that were fairly lukewarm. So Turkey, some people never heard about those countries, they never knew much about those countries: that is a fact. Turkey, Portugal and remember Portugal is important because that is the country that is very important in the one Net Book or Notebook per Child Project, so you see we have to tie in. Our foreign policy benefits our citizens.

Venezuela: Before we took office most people did not even realise that Venezuela is a neighbour you know, no that is serious. Venezuela was just a country you hear the name about but ah well it is there; but you never really know much about it. We had diplomatic relationship that is true but they never had much interaction it was not meaningful, this government made it meaningful and thanks to the Venezuelan government they have been good to us [Knocking on the desk] and we must remember that St Vincent the citizens, every and all in fact they were part of the Vision Now programme; the health refinance and the movement of people.

Brazil: All we heard about Brazil was that it is football. St Vincent has an embassy under our administration, we have the Cuban Embassy being based in St Vincent, it was not here before and the Brazilian Embassy that is a demonstration of the importance Brazilian placed on our friendship. Chile, Argentina, Malaysia; those are countries that the students we used to have quiz in school to try to find people to find them on the map. Now we are finding them in person by putting students to study in all of these countries [Applause] under the Unity Labour Party: so Speaker, this is important. We have heard over and over the importance of Education, we realise we do not have a lot of natural resources, we have human resources and limited too but we want to develop that. Many persons who do not understand what are policies on education in five to ten years they will understand. In five to ten years when we have an average of at least one college graduate in each of our twenty four thousand homes we will understand what we have been doing now. We are already beginning to reap the benefits and we will continue with our policies. You see education long time was for the selected few and that is what the opposition is trying to maintain. Many of them now, they do not want to have this playing field equal where the fisherman son and the farmers daughter could be at the same level academically like them [Knocking on the desk] and let us say it plain as what it is.

But this government, this Party, has decided we want to develop our people because in developing our people, we can be assured that the future will be secured. Because when I am retired I want to know that I can sit comfortably looking at the younger ones really capitalising on the foundation set by the Unity Labour Party, whichever government should be in office and I hope it will be the ULP for a long, long time because I believe with the ULP we stand a much better chance of moving this country forward.

Mr. Speaker, I know some others need to participate but I want to use the opportunity to thank all those foreign countries that have helped in our development; the traditional ones including North America, the EU mainly, the Republic of China on Taiwan, they have been very helpful to us, they have helped with all of our learning resource centers, our YES Programme, in health equipment and personnel and our International Airport. Mr. Speaker, I did not hear much about that but this is something that people must understand the significance of, you know. I went overseas and was discussing and everybody when they congratulate us on building an international airport; I told them well you know there was some opposition to it. They said, "Opposition to it, what are you talking about; how could any nation in this day and age be opposed to the development of an international airport." You know it is interesting that people who are looking in from outside cannot understand the logic of the opposition to such progressive move. [Laughs]

Mr. Speaker, the respect for St Vincent and the Grenadines has increased significantly since this government is in office.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Speaker, our ambassadors have done a great job, there are over 800 persons working in the military in the UK our young persons with opportunities that is something to celebrate about [Knocking on the desk] thanks to High Commissioner Lewis. Our Ambassador to the United Nations is now one of the most sought after Ambassador, he is well respected, he has led United Nations bodies and co-chaired, Mr. Speaker, these are things to be proud about; I am proud and so shall all Vincentians. Mr. Speaker, there is a lot to talk about; I really could not go without speaking on this Motion. I am satisfied that we have all reason to celebrate, I am satisfied that if people listen, if they read and if they look they will see.

Buccament Hotel Development did not just come so and it was opposed. It is interesting that many of those who opposed they have their relatives and their spouses and who else working with the same company that they tried to stop, the phantom project. Mr. Speaker, we have to talk these things, thousands of persons benefitted from that project and there is more to come from the ULP, in the next term and this term. This term we are going to deliver a lot and the next term too. Much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Member for South Central Windward, you have just about ... you have half an hour.

**HONOURABLE SABOTO CAESAR:** Mr. Speaker, It would have been remiss of me to sit there and not take the opportunity to speak on behalf of the many achievements that the Unity Labour Party would have achieved over the past 10 years. Looking back it appears like it was so easy and just before I go into the general thrust of my presentation; I would like to first remember the architects of the achievements. It is all well and good to see an international airport being constructed, schools being repaired or recovery after Hurricane Tomas, the low income homes which were built and the no income homes which were built; but it we must first understand that it took real flesh and blood persons to get these projects done. And it is in this vein, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to specially thank the Honourable Prime Minister for his vision and hard work over the past years.

Mr. Speaker, many persons who started with us in the capacity of Ministers and representatives are for different reasons not here with us today. But I would specially recognise all the Ministers who would have served under

the Unity Labour Party government for the last 10 years. [Knocking on the desk] I would also like to specially recognise Conrad Sayers who made a valuable contribution to the development of this country. [Knocking on the desk] Mr. Speaker, I would also like to recognise in my reflection though it is a period of celebration it is also a period of reflection: those hard working civil servants there could not have been a successful Education Revolution but for hardworking teachers. [Knocking on the desk] The improvements in the health sector could have only been a dream if it were not for the nurses and the doctors and all the persons working in the health sector. [Knocking on the desk]

Mr. Speaker, one very important plank of our achievements is in the area of crime fighting and crime prevention. [Knocking on the desk] I left St Vincent and the Grenadines in 2000 and I returned in 2005, therefore for the most part of the first term I was a student outside of St Vincent so I was just following by radio, television and newspapers, but I recall in 2005, when I started to work with the DPP Chambers that you heard ringing on the television and on the radio that the police officers and the Honourable Prime Minister they all saying that we have to be tough on crime and the causes of crime. And it is in this vein that I want to say a special thanks [to] the police department for doing an excellent job. [Applause] When I speak to my friends in the legal fraternity in the region and I tell them about the crime rate especially the reduced murder rate in St Vincent, they said they did not want to move here because if they move to St Vincent and the Grenadines as lawyers interested in doing murder cases they will be paupers. Whilst next door I not ill speaking another island but right there in St Lucia they almost had to have a state of emergency two months ago because of the spate of killings. We must commend the police force and the government for not only saying that we are going to be tough on crime and the causes of crime but actually for being successful.

Mr. Speaker, I delivered a lecture last week Friday in Boston at the Harvard law School and one professor made a very close observation about St Vincent and the Grenadines and he analysed our situation in a way that I did not really analyse it in that way before. He said in these words: "Tourism is to St Vincent as oil is to Saudi Arabia" I repeat, he said, "Tourism is to St Vincent and the Grenadines and the Caribbean as oil is to Saudi Arabia". Mr. Speaker, this government over the past 10 years we have done excellent work towards the development of our Tourism product and central to our work is our efforts to develop and to build an international airport. You know, such a large project is taking place in our country and it is so sad that it is not taking up the requisite portions of our national discussion. How many persons are speaking of this marvellous project that has the ability to transform a small vulnerable economy like that of St Vincent and the Grenadines: how many of us speak about it on a daily basis? They take it for granted. In fact, you drive past the airport and you see persons there working from 6:00 in the morning they have to be at work from 5:00, and it is almost as if you are waiting until the first jet to come in before you realise that such a massive project is taking place in this country.

Mr. Speaker, if it was not for the Labour Party Government, if it was not for the Honourable Prime Minister, we would not have been at that stage in the development of an international airport [applause]. It is almost ill to speak about increasing and improving your tourism product without speaking about improving accessibility to your country. I left St. Vincent last Thursday in the morning about 6:00 a.m., because of where I am living I had to be up about 4 O'clock in the morning, got to the airport because you have to check in early, because LIAT is leaving early sometimes [interjection] earlier. Got to Barbados, spend the whole day in Barbados, got

into Boston at 3:00 in the morning for a lecture at 8:30 a.m. Could you imagine if we had our own international airport?

I am not only using one selfish example, but right there in the lecture, persons who wanted to come to St. Vincent, they were saying, but it is easier for me to fly to London. It is easier for me to fly to Mexico and I am certain that when the international airport is completed very soon that we will see a definite boost in tourism in this country [applause].

Mr. Speaker, accessibility again, the jet port in Canouan, an excellent project, but as one constituent in South Central Windward said to me recently, she said, “the ULP has done so much in such a short space of time, it confuses even its own supporters as to how they rank the projects and programmes.” This Government is a Government that has the poor, the working class, the rural folk, the fisher folk, persons who are interested in private sector growth and development; every sector of this country, every sector has been touched by the Unity Labour Party Government [applause].

Mr. Speaker, on the issue, because it is all well and good to speak about accessibility, but in the Ministry of Tourism in the past five years, we would have seen the development and a lot of work being done on our sites. When you look at Black Point, Salt Pond Owia, Rawacou, and those other sites which we have done excellent work on you know that we have tourism and Belmont and they are so numerous to mention, but we continue to keep tourism to the fore in our minds as we develop this small vulnerable economy.

Mr. Speaker, already in this term we are looking towards non-traditional source markets in tourism. Recently I had a discussion to organise and to establish from West Africa in Ghana a link where we can begin to work with to attract tourists from those destinations in West Africa. Also, we are looking at non-traditional source markets as Venezuela and Brazil, and it is all our hope that these projects would bear fruits.

Mr. Speaker, our investments in education would definitely assist in what I consider to be the intellectual decolonisation of our state. Some persons say when you invest in education you do not see the returns today, you do not see them tomorrow and because of that you should invest in things that are more tangible according to them. Let us never forget that one of the most important programmes that we would have embarked on was the attempt at Constitutional Reform.

Many, many generations to come will read about the occurrences in that period. What we were attempting to do as a Government then is the same thing that Dr. Eric Williams would have sought for during his time in Trinidad and Tobago and I must say, in counting the achievements of our Government, I want to also count or attempt at reforming the Constitution as a great achievement by the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines [applause] because it is to the fore an expression of our political sovereignty. We would have done excellent work at regional integration and you know one of the most shocking things to me, the first person who pose a question after the lecture at Harvard Law School was a professor by the name of Professor Woo and you know sometimes when you think that you are a small island and that you are just out there, but there are many persons looking in and observing. He said in his question, he said, “your Prime Minister”, when he said that I actually felt like if I was in Parliament, he said, “Your Prime Minister usually speak about the creation of a Caribbean

Civilisation, what do you have to tell us about that?” This is definitely a sure sign that we are reaching places [applause]. We are definitely reaching places and sometimes when you see the attitude of the Opposition, times are hard internationally and we are coping with our limited resources.

A ship is in the cruise ship harbour, persons are here on vacation for a day to spend money and to boost tourism. The same Opposition which in the budgetary debates was speaking about arrivals and stay over visitors and instead of welcoming persons, they are promoting acts which definitely are not welcoming.

Mr. Speaker, the Unity Labour Party has done excellent work over the past 10 years. It has definitely created an atmosphere which has influenced our young persons, not only to go off to universities to get degrees, but also to come back and to serve their country. It is in this vein that I also want to thank all those young persons who are returning year after year to build this blessed nation of ours.

Mr. Speaker, the Unity Labour Party is a party that will be around for a very, very, very long time [applause]. It is comprised of persons who are dedicated; persons who listened to the calls of the people and you can definitely see our track record, it stands high and it is definitely one that the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the region we are all proud of. Mr. Speaker, I am obliged [applause].

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Maybe at this point the Honourable Senator may probably want to wind up this. You have 15 minutes to do so. I will stop you when you have 5 minutes left, so go ahead.

**HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I stand to wrap up completion of this debate, the Unity Labour Party performance in Government for the past 10 years.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned earlier that 1 hour and 45 minutes is not enough time to speak about the Unity Labour Party performance in Government for the past 10 years, but we continue to abide with the laws of this Honourable House and Mr. Speaker, we are strong and firm in our belief and you heard it from all the Honourable Members that we will continue to work and we have done extremely well in Government over the past 10 years.

I praise the Honourable Saboto Caesar for remembering those Members of Parliament who served before us. I also praise him for allowing us to recognise the great work of our Prime Minister is being observed internationally [applause]. Mr. Speaker, we could go on and on about the achievements. Mr. Speaker, we will not allow ourselves to become chatterboxes, but whenever we are in a forum to speak about the Unity Labour Party performance, what will always be said is that we are a Government of change and we are a Government of success [applause]. After 10 years in Government our people are more aware, more appreciative, more open minded, and there is a greater expression of love [applause]. People are free to talk every day, Mr. Speaker. Ever so often you hear on the various talk shows whether it is breakfast with Ralph, or one other Lynch, whatever, the shortcomings as they will say with the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, but the reality remains the same. Should an election be called tomorrow the Unity Labour Party will return in Government [applause]. It is easy for us to talk you know, Mr. Speaker. Everybody has that free will, but we

must be very genuine and give justice in doing so and when good has been performed, we must respect that and when the Unity Labour Party is performing, the Opposition must respect that.

Elections are over, we have settled down and we have commenced our work in carrying this country forward. We are united in our efforts to do so. There are a lot of projects that have gone past us complete successful, sometimes we forget about them. That is why this motion is brought forward, to bring remembrance and that is why we would have marched last week as a symbol, Mr. Speaker. But those who believe that the reign is short lived, they must think again. As our succession grows and as our ability to bring projects and more projects to St. Vincent and the Grenadines successfully, so will be our reign, Mr. Speaker.

The Unity Labour Party will be in Government for a very long time and I know David Browne has made a wonderful choice to be part of such a wonderful team [applause]. Mr. Speaker, as I often say, it is not the size of the man, but the mind of the man.

**HONOURABLE CLAYTON BURGIN:** That is true.

**HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE:** And there are those who are very large and balloon spirited, focus always in the sky and sometimes never get to see the reality of the work that is done in our country. And I believe they would be on one of those flights landing at Argyle and still cannot come to grips that it is an international airport. I honestly believe that, Mr. Speaker. You see, there are some who talk and dream of worthwhile accomplishments, but the Unity Labour Party stays awake and make it happen [applause].

Mr. Speaker, I thank you, this is my first motion in this Honourable House, definitely would not be my last motion. I know Members of the Opposition are not here today, I urge them to come back in this Honourable House and get the people work going. I also encourage the Leader of the Opposition, I understand from what has been given to him and we did not make mention of that this morning during our debate, but the Leader of the Opposition benefitted tremendously from this Government. His salary was raised to that of a Minister to make him even more comfortable in that particular position [laughter].

Mr. Speaker...

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Inaudible.

**HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE:** Most definitely. Mr. Speaker, I thank all the Honourable Members for making their contribution to this debate. We will continue to work together and serve this Government wholeheartedly. I am much obliged, Mr. Speaker [applause].

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, you just move the operative part of the Motion, **BE IT RESOLVED** so that we can vote on it. Read it, read it.

**HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE:** Mr. Speaker, all right.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that this Honourable House commend the ULP government on its excellent governance of St. Vincent and the Grenadines over the past ten years and urge it to keep in close communion with the people as a whole so as to enhance further its sterling performance thus far.

**HONOURABLE CLAYTON BURGIN:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Motion passed.**

3. **2011 SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES FOR ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES**

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Prime Minister.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move the following Motion standing in my name on the Order Paper.

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

**AND WHEREAS** Supplementary Estimates Nos. 1 to 13 of 2011, have been prepared and laid in the House of Assembly;

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that this Honourable House do approve the Supplementary Estimates Nos. 1 to 13 of 2011.

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

**Question put and agreed to.**

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Any debate on the motion?

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, there are 13 Supplementary Appropriation Bills which follow on 13 Supplementary Estimates. The practice, Mr. Speaker, the convention is that we debate both the Supplementary Estimates and the Supplementary Appropriation Bills as one and in a rolled up fashion.

So Mr. Speaker, if you permit me the application of that same convention I shall do that debate and therefore to move each of the Supplementary Appropriation Bills in turn in then to have the debate take place as one. So I can then proceed, Mr. Speaker, in respect of the 13 Appropriation Bills.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Fair enough.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, what I shall do is to point out the sums involved in each of the Bills and then would move the Bills for the Acts in each particular case.

Mr. Speaker, the first one, because there are 13 of them in respect in excess of Appropriation Act 2008, so that these Supplementary Appropriation Bills relate to Supplementary Estimates from 2009; 2008 into 2009 because the Bill would have been passed in December 2008 and therefore the Supplementary's would have been in 2009.

The first one is not number, Mr. Speaker, that is number 1, the one which is listed Supplementary Appropriation Act, 2011 that is \$7,279,815; the fourth \$5,689,981; the fifth \$7,081,327; number 6. \$5,400,000; number 7. \$4,118,035; number 8. \$4,266,667; number 9. \$5,710,00; number 10. \$5,099,225; bill number 11. \$4,285,134; bill number 12. \$7,165,796; and bill number 13. \$6,205,076.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the respective 13 Bills for Acts to sanction payments from the Consolidated Fund upon certain services in excess of the Appropriation Act 2008 relating to the year ending on the 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2009 in respect of the particular sums read out in each of the Bills respectively and I so move the first reading.

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

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a first time.**

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, under Standing Order 48(2) I beg to move that each of these 13 Bills be passed in all its stages in today's sitting.

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

**Question put and agreed to.**

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move singly as has been permitted for us to do cumulatively, the 13 Bills for Acts to sanction payments from the Consolidated Fund upon services in excess of the Appropriation Act 2008 relating to the year ending on the 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2009 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. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, it is important that I provide the Honourable Members and for those who are listening, the nature and character of Supplementary Appropriation Estimates and Supplementary Appropriation Bills and the procedure required.

Mr. Speaker, under the Constitution of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the section 70(3) it reads as follows:

**“If in respect of any financial year it is found:**

- (a) That the amount appropriated by the appropriation law to any purpose is insufficient or that a need has arisen for expenditure for a purpose to which no amount has been appropriated by that law; or**
- (b) That any excess monies have been expended for any purpose in excess of the amount appropriated to that purpose by the appropriation law or for a purpose to which no amount has been appropriated by that law, a supplementary estimate showing the sums required or spent shall be laid before the House and when the supplementary estimates have been approved by the House, a Supplementary Appropriation Bill shall be introduced in the House providing for the issue of such sums from the Consolidated Funds and appropriating them to the purposes specified therein.”**

It is the same principle, Mr. Speaker, relating to the presentation annually in December or January of the Estimates of Expenditure and the Appropriation Bill and if there are supplementary's you follow the same procedure.

Under the Standing Orders of the House of Assembly, there is a provision for the Standing Committee on Finance to meet to consider the Supplementary Estimates and the Supplementary Appropriation Bill. That Standing Committee on finance under Standing Order 61, the Standing Committee of Finance met yesterday, Mr. Speaker and the 13 Supplementary Appropriation Bills and the 13 Supplementary Estimates were considered and this morning Honourable Members will recall that I laid the minutes of that meeting on the table of this Honourable House. So we have satisfied all the procedural requirements.

Mr. Speaker, there are two ways in which Supplementary Appropriation Estimates and thus Supplementary Appropriation Bill can come to this Honourable House.

- 1. Is for Parliament to bring directly a Supplementary Estimate with a Supplementary Appropriation Bill. One case in point was in July 2001 when I brought such a Supplementary Estimate and Supplementary Appropriation Bill to make certain additions to what was the budget which had been presented in December 2000 by the then Minister of Finance, the Honourable Arnhim Eustace and we came to office at the end of March and it was necessary for the work of our Government in the first year to bring a specific Supplementary Estimate and Supplementary Appropriation Bill to address certain matters as a whole. So that is one way.**

- 2. The second..., and that usually takes the form of a kind..., a sort of a mini budget. The second and usual way, is by way first by an executive act known as a Special Warrant and the Finance and Audit Act first of all and subsequently, the Financial Administration Act. Provision is made for expenditure which is urgent and unforeseen and which urgency is determined by the necessity and desirability for funding, for programmes and projects of the Government and to keep the Government going. In respect of any item which you could not quite foresee and which has arisen in an urgent sense. And the necessary preparation is made and the document known as the Special Warrant is issued under the hand of the Minister of Finance and the expenditure is carried out under that Special Warrant issued under the hand of the Minister of Finance. Parliament gives the Minister of Finance that authority, but the Minister of Finance is not a law unto himself. Anytime the Minister of Finance issues Special Warrants, those Special Warrants must at some time come to the Parliament to be approved in the form of Supplementary Estimates and Supplementary Appropriation Bill. In other words, the Executive Act of the Minister of Finance is given Parliamentary clothing and that is what takes place. So that the monies which we are addressing here are monies which had been spent already and which were approved by the Minister of Finance by way of Special Warrant for the purpose of urgent and unforeseen expenditure and the list of items will indicate this.**

In some cases, Mr. Speaker, it is for the journalising of monies. For instance, you may have a grant from say the European Union and the money is..., you did not have quite that same amount of money in the Estimates, but the money is there in the donor, the European Union to give to you and when they give it to you, though you may not have had all of it in your Estimates and in your Appropriation Bill, but that money spent and you have to journalise it, you have to bring it into the accounts, so you do it by way of a Special Warrant and subsequently of course Supplementary Estimates and Supplementary Appropriation Bills. There are other cases. You may have underestimated in your Estimates the extent of the monies required to pay pension monies to retired public servants, you cannot say it is not in the budget therefore you do not pay it and there are some items like that, Mr. Speaker. You have to do it by way of a Special Warrant or it may be in the case of say the Referendum of 2009 when by way of a Special Warrant I had approved \$4 million for the purpose of the YES vote. So there are many different ways, it may be as we have had cases here in these Estimates, monies to pay for students overseas, for Social Welfare payments where we have increased the amount as we have gone along in the year.

It may be that we have..., I did not budget for \$3 million for Christmas work and I give \$3 million worth of Christmas work. I may have budgeted for \$1 million but I decide as I catch my hand during the year, I feel that I can give an extra \$2 million and I put \$3 million I have to bring the other \$2 million in by way of a Special Warrant and so on and so forth. And the documents are circulated and in each particular case, Mr. Speaker, there are explanations in every single case of the Supplementary Estimates and therefore, I would urge Honourable Members, if they have not looked at every case to look at each case.

You may see here for instance, there is one of them of \$1,020,684 to provide funds for the purchase of materials, supplies, rental of vehicles for training programme to be conducted by the police force and to also cover refund of airfare and allowances covered by the Regional Security System. That had to do with the Vincy Pac and so on and so forth. So there are examples and there are all..., every single one is spelt out and that is the manner in which the approvals take place.

Mr. Speaker, over the years, we have had difficulties in having the Special Warrants come here on a timely basis. An arrangement has now been made in the Ministry of Finance that these Special Warrants would come by way of Supplementary Estimates and Supplementary Appropriation Bill in a timelier manner than hitherto. In fact, the new Act, the Finance Administration Act mandates that we should bring them here within six months and that is what we are going to do for those from 2010 ending the year 2010 and we will bring some hopefully on the next occasion in relation to 2010.

It is important that they be brought on a timely basis, a reasonably timely basis; because if they are brought much too long after, it limits the extent of Parliament power and we must seek as a matter of good governance to ensure that Parliamentary oversight of all of these matters remains. It is something which I have spoken about when I was in the Opposition, it is something which the Director of Audit takes up and it is something which I have been on with the Ministry of Finance and there now I have been assured, systems in place to ensure the timely presentation.

Mr. Speaker, that is in effect what the story is; these Special Warrants are not significant amounts in relation to what is the overall budget. I should say to the Honourable Members and by way of the public, I usually, I am very reluctant except in very extreme circumstances to issue to authorise Special Warrants early in any financial year. The reason for this is quite simple. If you go through a budgetary exercise very seriously, unless a genuine emergency arises, it should be inside of the annual estimates and budget and you cannot pass an Appropriation Bill in December and somebody is coming to you, a Permanent Secretary who is accounting officer is coming to you in January and asking me to issue a Special Warrant. It will have to be an extraordinary circumstance. So you are unlikely to find any of them issued for instance Mr. Speaker, in the month of January.

Of course, you can have a situation in January, there might be a natural disaster and if there is a natural disaster, obviously for sums which were not provided, the Government has to function and I have to get it done. It may be that I probably will have had say \$1 million for repairs of bridges, but an important bridge fell down, I cannot say, "well it is only \$1 million there for bridges and it is going to take \$4 million to repair this bridge." No, I have to provide the money right away and I have to do it by way of a Special Warrant and get it done, because the work of the Government has to go on and I always tell the public servants to make sure that they do not bring Special Warrants for me to early in the financial year or in any event on matters which they ought reasonably to have foreseen, because I have to establish controls to make the budgetary process itself a viable one and for us to keep controls on expenditure and to do so in a responsible manner.

Now there are many persons who do not..., some persons may be listening to me and do not think I am talking Greek, but those who listen and understand what I am saying, I hope that they can use it to strengthen their own understanding as to how Governments works so that Parliamentarians and the Government can be more accountable to the people in respect of financial matters. And that is why, for example, I always insist on having the Leader of the Opposition called meetings of the Public Accounts Committee so that some of these very matters can be raised and we can work on all of them together, because at the end of the day I am very much interested in having the best governance possible.

This Government is known for good governance and one of the things which are important is that we address these matters with openness and transparency. I should point out that when we were improving the law in this regard in the Financial Administration Act, the day when we debated the matter, the Opposition absented itself. It was on one of those days, you know it is every now and again, or ever so often..., in fact, it is not now and again anymore, it is a ritual now you know, like today.

When I was in the Opposition, I can tell you this, from the moment the budget was finished I was not waiting until the second meeting of the House, I had my motion in for the third meeting, because I did not want Stewart Nanton or anybody on the Government who were not Ministers to put in a motion. So I used to make sure that I beat them to it. So that today will be my day. You had to listen to me. But instead of that, they are all about talking and today is the Honourable Senator David Browne's day. Why? He has just come to the Parliament and he has beaten the entire Opposition to the punch [applause]. He has put in not one motion, he has put in two so just in case one was finished early for whatever reason and if only he and his seconder, the Honourable Elvis Charles had spoken, he had a second one, and that is the way in which I would expect the Opposition to behave. I use to put in two, sometimes three motions and when you talk about questions, I not only used to put in questions for oral answers, I used to put in four questions at each sitting for written answers and every Member of the Opposition used to do the same thing.

On one occasion Mr. Speaker, I ask a question, which had taken the public servants over six months to answer. I asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs to provide me with a list of every Treaty and every Agreement to which the Government is a signatory or to which it became a successor at Independence and therefore, which Treaty or Agreement still applies. He was very happy, because he had been asking the public servants for that and they were not giving him. He told me that personally, Mr. Alpien Allen, but every Parliament, I said, "Well where is answer to my question?" They say, "They are still preparing it." It took them six months to give me the written answer, several pages. That is the function of the Opposition, to get the business of the country before the people and in those days, you could not broadcast live. It is different now. It is on two radio stations and on TV.

A gentleman from Trinidad called me this morning and asked me to remind him on which stations, because he hears our Parliament is meeting, he wants to listen and which stations. I told him NBC and Star FM. So all now so he is listening, he is following Parliament in Trinidad and Tobago, what is happening here on the internet. That is what we have done [applause] and that is all part of good governance. But of course if they do not want to do their job..., but one thing I say Mr. Speaker, you cannot ask people for a higher job when the lower one you ain't doing it well. You cannot get promoted to the top work if the lower job you are not doing well. Anybody who give you the top job when you are not performing your existing job at a lower level well, well something must be wrong with the people who will give you such a promotion, you know.

So Mr. Speaker, though I speak on the Supplementary Estimates and the Supplementary Appropriation Bills I address the question on governance. Mr. Speaker, if you may just permit me, I want and I have to find the opportunity and I think here is where I can do it, to show our own contribution internationally to good governance. Miss Rene Baptiste, former Minister here is currently in Nigeria as a member of the Commonwealth team observing those elections [applause] Presidential and Parliamentary [applause].

Nigeria is the most populous state in the whole of Africa and that is at one end. Somebody who has just left this Parliament and somebody who is now a first time elected member, the Honourable Minister of Tourism and Industry with utmost modesty today, he spoke about his visit to the United States where he delivered a lecture to the Harvard Law School [applause]. The two top law schools in the United States are Yale and Harvard and to be invited to address the Harvard Law School is a sign that somebody somewhere recognises your quality [applause] and your contribution to good governance and I want to congratulate the Honourable Minister of Tourism.

Mr. Speaker, I do not believe there is anything usefully that I could add to the contribution that I had made thus far in terms of the procedure, all the requirements are being fulfilled and all the details are before this Honourable House spelt out in every single material particular. I am obliged. I do not know whether there is any further debate.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Any further debate on the Bills? Go on Prime Minister, it seemed not to be any further debate.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, in that case before we go to the Committee of the Whole House, I should simply approve first the motion on the Supplementary Estimates and approve those and then we go on the Bills. So we get the Estimates out of the way as the Constitution said we should first do.

Mr. Speaker, I read only the operative part. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members,

**BE IT RESOLVED** that this Honourable House do approve the Supplementary Estimates Nos. 1 to 13 of 2011 which are before this Honourable House.

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

**Question put and agreed to.**

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move that this Honourable House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to consider each of the 13 Bills clause by clause.

**House went into Committee.**

**House Resumed.**

**Bill reported and read without amendment**

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move in the case of each of these 13 Bills which has just come out from the Committee of the Whole House, I beg to move in each case that the Bill for an Act to sanction payments from the Consolidated Fund upon certain

services in excess of the Appropriation Act 2008 relating to the year ending on the 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2009 in each case be read a third time 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.**

#### **14. FINANCE BILL 2011**

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move a Bill for an Act to amend the laws contained in the Provisional Collection of Taxes Order 2011. The title of the Bill makes the purposes self explanatory. I beg to move this Bill be read a first time.

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

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

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move under Standing Order 48(2) 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. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move that a Bill for an Act to amend the laws contained in the Provisional Collection of Taxes Order 2011 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.**

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Debate on the Bill.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, there really ought not to be any debate on this save by way of explanation. There are seven laws which are being amended. These are contained in the Provisional Collection of Taxes Order. Mr. Speaker, each of these laws to be amended here has been the subject of debate in the budgetary proposals. As Honourable Members are aware that under the

law, the executive is permitted to issue a Provisional Collection of Taxes Order in respect of announcements made in relation to any revenue matter in the budget, the purpose being to commence the collection of those new taxes; for instance we have had some upward adjustments of motor vehicle licenses and we have had a downward adjustments of certain other matters.

The Provisional Collection of Taxes Order is made to ensure that those new revenue measures, whether they go up or come down are being enforced as of the day when the executive issues the Provisional Collection of Taxes Order and the law says that within a period of four months after the publication of the Provisional Collection of Taxes Order, there must be brought to the Parliament a Bill, which is known as the finance bill, really to enact what is the Provisional Collection of Taxes Order. In other words, the law permits for practical purposes for the executive to issue the order that is to say, for the Government, but unless Parliament approves it after it is issued, it would lapse after four months, unless of course there is another Bill, which comes to validate and in a sense revive them.

The Provisional Collection of Taxes Order 2011 was issued as I recall it on the 1<sup>st</sup> February so that we are well within the four month period and this is basically to provide the continuing legal effect for what was issued in the Provisional Collection of Taxes Order and the matters wherein were debated at the time of the budget debate and there is no need for any additional debate. The laws which have been addressed, Mr. Speaker, are the Registration of Documents Act, the Survey Office Fees Act, the Professional Licensing Act, the Stamp Act and there are several aspects of the Stamp Act, then there is the Interest Levy Act, the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Act and the Excise Tax Act 2007 and that really is the simple story on this matter, Mr. Speaker. We are fulfilling the requirements of good governance and to ensure the Parliamentary approval of the Provisional Collection of Taxes Order. I am obliged.

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

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, it is a wonderful thing when the Opposition is not here. I get through my work quicker [laughter].

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

**House went into Committee.**

**House Resumed.**

**Bill reported and read with one amendment**

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move that a Bill for an Act to amend the laws contained in the Provisional Collection of Taxes Order 2011 be read a third time 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.**

**15. LOAN AUTHORISATION (CARICOM) DEVELOPMENT FUND BILL, 2011**

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move that a Bill for an Act to authorise the Government to raise a loan from the CARICOM Development fund and to provide for matters connected therewith.

Mr. Speaker, I beg that this be read a first time. The objects and reasons they are contained in the title.

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

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

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move under Standing Order 48(2) that this Bill be taken through all its stages at today's sitting.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move that a Bill for an Act to authorise the Government to raise a loan from the CARICOM Development Fund and to provide for matters connected therewith 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.**

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Debate on the Bill.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, the CARICOM Development Fund is a financing mechanism established under section 158 of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas 2001. Mr. Speaker, section 158 of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas is not something optional. It is part of the architecture, the legal architecture of CARICOM. There are some people from some countries in CARICOM who seem to think that section 158 and the CARICOM Development Fund is something optional. When I signed the Treaty on behalf of St. Vincent and the Grenadines in July 2001, I signed on to everything inside of that Treaty, including Article 158 which says, "it is hereby established a CARICOM Development Fund from which assistance will be provided to disadvantaged countries, economies and sectors.

It is established that is what we signed on to. The framers of the Treaty wanted to make it clear that it is part of the compensatory mechanism in a single market and in a single economy.

It is part of the legal architecture which says that if you have an integration movement and the members of that integration moment are unequally yoked, the integration movement inevitably will collapse. So for example, we do not have a significant manufacturing sector. Trinidad and Tobago has enormous advantages, they have cheaper fuel, in fact, they get subsidised fuel to do their manufacturing. It should not be like that, but they get it. In fact, properly speaking any subsidy of that kind given to the manufacturing sector in Trinidad and Tobago has to fall within the four walls of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas and you cannot then have the advantage with your energy and I use Trinidad, but it could be any other country whatever advantage you have, so you can dump your goods in St. Vincent and the Grenadines where there is no common external tariff because the goods originate in CARICOM, so you have a competitive advantage on goods coming from Guatemala, from Brazil, from the United States or wherever, because they have to pay at least the 15 percent common external tariff. Goods from Trinidad, Barbados for example do not have to come in, do not have to pay that 15 percent common external tariff.

Now if St. Vincent and the Grenadines provides a protected market for you from the more developed countries for your manufactured goods, clearly something has to be in it for us and one of the things in it for us and one of the things in it for us is the promise of the CARICOM Development Fund to balance off, to compensate for the disadvantage. Another one is for our people to be able to move freely so that we can go to Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago and get jobs within the context of CARICOM without any hassle. We are having a problem with the jobs and the extent of the assistance out of the CARICOM Development Fund is very small, because it was agreed that we would capitalise the fund initially with US\$215 million; \$120 million will come from the contributors within CARICOM and Trinidad and Jamaica were to be the most significant contributors and the other \$130 we will seek to raise those monies from funding agencies all over the world to put in the fund.

I went to Turkey and I helped to raise money for the fund, because I know we will get from it. For instance, I think is US\$4 million came from Turkey. CARICOM has not been successful in raising the \$130 million, neither has the fund been contributed to up to the \$120 million, because some people are not contributing. St. Vincent and the Grenadines is paying its contribution I can assure you, because we see this as an important mechanism and I have had to fight battles in CARICOM for us to start to get this fund operational and then for St. Vincent and the Grenadines to get some money.

We have come here with this Bill to give us permission to borrow US\$2.57 million at preferential rates, but we are also getting in the region of \$1.7 million in grants. So what we are getting from them is in the region of US\$4.2 million. It was my aim to get as much as US\$16 million, but because the fund has not been fully capitalised, we have not been able to get the extent of what we expect under the Treaty and this is why I speak about the disadvantaged position in which St. Vincent and the Grenadines has been placed in many situations. There is absolutely no doubt that the principal beneficiary of CARICOM is Trinidad and Tobago in economic terms, absolutely no doubt.

Now the former Government under Prime Minister Manning had set up a mechanism outside of the CARICOM Development Fund, which was an optional facility what is called, "The CARICOM Petroleum Facility." And used to get in the region of US\$5 million to US\$8 million per year. From that particular when the oil prices went high as it is now going, I asked the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago in Grenada about the status of the CARICOM Petroleum Facility and I am yet to get an answer. I asked the Foreign Minister at the Heads of Government too in Grenada, I am yet to get an answer. What is the position with the CARICOM Petroleum Facility? That one is optional, but I still want to know whether you are doing anything optional. But the CARICOM Development Fund, when we get any money from that that is nobody talking about we coming for an ATM machine, because that is part of the juridical architecture of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas to which I signed up [applause].

So I want to make the position of the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines absolutely clear. I am not throwing words for anybody, all I have to do is to state what is legal, what is not an option and what is an option. If what Prime Minister Manning had in place for the CARICOM Petroleum Facility and that was..., if anybody now considers that to be optional and they are not taking part in that anymore, well I need to know. We all in the OECS need to know because we have a particular response.

In the same way CL Financial which is the parent company for CLICO and British American, they collect in this Eastern Caribbean from the OECS countries over \$1 billion in these annuities EC\$1 billion where they paid 8½ or 9 percent, take all the money and invest it in Florida in real estate and down in Trinidad and they have the assets and we have the liabilities and you expect everything to be honky dory in CARICOM and you treating the issue in a flippant manner. We have to speak out on these things. This is an opportunity on this Bill for me to set matters in prospective, to put the position of the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines with clarity.

There is no Government in the region which is more committed to CARICOM than this Government [applause], but an integration movement in which the members are unequally yoked will not survive. I say further that for the movement to survive there must be a modern application of the ancient Aristotelian principle of equity among equals proportionality among unequals and we have to have proportionality from us because we are not equal with Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados and Jamaica. Equity among equals proportionality among unequals in terms of contribution, these are fundamental issues upon which we have to speak with great openness and honesty. You have to speak as if possessed of the wisdom of a Pauline scholar.

These are matters at the special meeting of CARICOM scheduled for Guyana. We are still working out the dates, a two-day meeting where all of these matters will have to be put on the table with the leaders with frankness, with no other set of people in the room other than one advisor, one trusted advisor, so we can talk our minds and we come to proper conclusions in the interest of our people.

So Mr. Speaker, this is the two..., in addition to a grant which we are getting from the CARICOM Development Fund that I have indicated to the tune of about \$1.7 million, we are borrowing \$2.57 million. Now what are we going to do with this over US\$4 million? We are applying it to the airport, the international airport at Argyle. You notice that we are almost ready to start some paving? This is to buy the equipment to crash the stones to

lay the base and to do some paving [applause]. They tell me that I would not see the airport in my lifetime; well the Opposition probably has my life in their hands. But I do not pay them any mind with that.

What I need to reproach them on is this, everything which goes well in this country they says, thank God, but anything which goes wrong, blame the comrade. I accept that we must thank Almighty God for all our blessings and when things go right, because it is through us, he acts through us and when he gives the vision and the fortitude for us to start the international airport and the courage, we thank him, but I just want to remind persons, especially those who believe that they have a telephone line to God. Some of them they think God in on their side you know and nobody else side. I saw somebody from the Community College, a teacher writing, he is deciding which side God is on and which side God is not on. I thought that God was on everybody side [interjection] eh? No, but he is now arrogating to himself..., I wonder what he is teaching people children in Community College, if he is writing such rubbish? [Interjection] eh? I read these things, I do not get involved in any loose talk about these matters and I do not talk frequently about these matters, but when the opportunity comes, I have to speak about them.

What are you teaching peoples children at the Community College if you are writing an article in the newspaper saying God is on this side and not on that side? I am not talking about an issue you know. According to him God is not on the side of the ULP. He said so before the election and he said so after the election. Well if God is not on the side of the ULP and God would not allow an ungodly group to win, it means that he does not have quite the right telephone connection with Almighty God to put it metaphorically, because he got it wrong. I really do not know what the matter with these people is.

When I say the Our Father prayer and I say, the, I believe the "Creedo" I know God is listening to me. Why they believe is only them God listening? Eh? They have a monopoly on He who is the creator of all of us, amazing phenomenon, but as I say, everything for that group of people which goes right and I am talking about the Opposition, thank God, but anything which does not go right, blame Ralph. What a world eh? You know that is how it comes out; everybody in this country knows it? And when you are unfair to a human being who is trying his best and Almighty God knows he is trying his best and a group of people who are trying their best and who are praying and who are asking for guidance, there is after all a God who sees and hear all things [applause].

So Mr. Speaker, this money is for equipment for stone crushing and equipment for paving. You notice how this Government functions in terms of its good governance? Ralph Gonsalves as Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker, has never borrowed a cent on behalf of the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines unless I have the legal authority so to do. Even when we made the arrangements with Venezuela, I came here and I got the legal authority. I am borrowing this money from the CARICOM Development Fund and I come for the legal authority. When I have this, I can then go and sign on the dotted line. I am not signing on the line until I have this, because when I leave this office and the good Lord places me where I must retire, nobody is going to harass me about anything I signed without permission of the Parliament. You hear me? I am not saying I would not make mistakes you know, but you notice how I go about the business of the finances of this country. Eh?

**HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL:** Walk carefully.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Yes, as sister G says, walk carefully. Walk justly, because you cannot lead unless you have principles. You cannot lead unless you have courage and you cannot lead unless you have character you see and that is why I like to talk to them about all those things. About principles, about philosophy, and about character you know. And I like to talk about character especially with those who play holier than Thou. I have sinned and come short of the glory of God and seek redemption, but some of the others, you hear them talk, and they believe they are holier more than Jesus Christ. That is their arrogance and their vanity. Yes, this is about money, Mr. Speaker, but it is about all those things of which I speak and I am sorry the Opposition is not here for the debate on this.

So this is another limb in the process of getting things done for the international airport. In relation to the terminal building, Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed that we have not started the terminal building yet, but I am told that this month we are starting. We should have started since last year. Hopefully we should have started by October, but we did not have control over the process. There have been some hard negotiations with the company which has been awarded this contract. We are now at one, as the lawyers would say, we are *ad idem* and we will move forward together and because we did not start that as early as we thought we are delayed a few months, but when people talk I remind them and I see the Chairman of the NIS is here, the NIS had all the money for the building and those who build the building, they had overrun at NIS by over two years. A building you know, they build their own house. Some people they are having overrun of a year and a half, sometimes longer. We are building the biggest project since conquest and settlement [applause] you hear, the biggest since conquest and settlement over EC\$600 million and they are worried about if you are a few months delayed. Way you say the end of 2012, you going into 2013 now, but what is the matter? Nobody ever try it, nobody ever tried it, but they will get the verdict from the people when it is finished and when we go after it is finished in 2015 I am absolutely sure that the people would say, “my dear Ralph you are my son,” the older ones would say, “you are my son,” the younger ones would say, “you are my father, you are my brother in whom I am most pleased, have some more time, have some more time with your team, have some more time, keep the comrade there and keep the fire burning.” I am obliged, Mr. Speaker [applause].

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Any further debate on this Bill? No further debate, Honourable Prime Minister.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** 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.

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

**House went into Committee.**

**House Resumed.**

**Bill reported and read without amendment.**

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move that a Bill for an Act to authorise the Government to raise a loan from the CARICOM Development Fund and to provide for matters connected therewith be read a third time 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.**

16. **REVISED TREATY OF BASSETTERRE ESTABLISHING THE ORGANISATION OF EASTERN CARIBBEAN STATES ECONOMIC UNION BILL, 2011**

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move that a Bill for an Act to give the force of law to the Revised Treaty of Bassetterre establishing the organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Economic Union and the protocol of Eastern Caribbean Economic Union in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and for related matters be read a first time.

The object and reasons for the Bill, they are contained in the long title itself, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I do not wish to proceed with the Bill today beyond the first reading. I want to afford one more opportunity to the Opposition since we had been here and we approved in principle the Treaty prior to my signing where I got the authority of the House to sign. I am hopeful that the meeting of the House in May, we will be able to get this done. Whether or not they come on that occasion we will have it done, because I want to have it concluded for the 18<sup>th</sup> June which is the anniversary of the Treaty of Bassetterre of 1981 and which is the deadline which we have set ourselves as leaders within the OECS. So we will do the second reading and the third reading on the next occasion.

17. **IMMUNISATION OF CHILDREN (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2011**

**HONOURABLE CECIL MC KIE:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move the first reading of Bill for an Act to amend the Immunisation of Children Act. This amendment will seek to look at section 4 of the Act and we delete the proviso and insert the following:

**“Provided that in relation to vaccination against any specified disease listed in the First Schedule, the certificate may be issued after all the doses have been administered.”**

And in case of the First Schedule to amend it by adding the following items:

**“Hepatitis B and Haemophilus Influenza B.”**

**HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a first time.**

**HONOURABLE CECIL MC KIE:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, in keeping with Standing Order 48(2) I beg to move that this Bill be taken through all its stages at today’s sitting and passed.

**HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**HONOURABLE CECIL MC KIE:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move that an Act to amend the Immunisation of Children Act be read a second time.

**HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a second time.**

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Debate on the Bill, Honourable Minister.

**HONOURABLE CECIL MC KIE:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I am happy to be able to debate the amendment to this Bill today. If we look at the first amendment in section 4 we would see that the proviso would be deleted and replaced by the words “Provided that in relation to vaccination against any specified disease listed in the First Schedule, the certificate may be issued after all the doses have been administered.” And in the case of the First Schedule it would be amended to add the following two items to the schedule Hepatitis B and Haemophilus Influenza B.

Mr. Speaker, it is very important that we understand why we must implement these changes to this particular Act and I want to look first of all to the Mission Statement as obtains with the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment and it states as such: “To provide equitable, quality, sustainable, comprehensive, primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare, health promotion, nutrition and health education services to the population of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, to promote the protection and preservation of the environment and its natural resources through a process of health service delivery, environmental assessment, research in dynamic management within the context of available resources, thus contributing to a healthier nation living in environmentally safe and friendly communities.”

And what is the vision of the Ministry? “To have a healthy population living in an environmentally sound communities empowered with a holistic knowledge of health, development and environmental issues.” It is also very important that we look at the strategic objectives of that Ministry for the year 2012 and some of them I will focus on. Enhancement of primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare services delivery, to make available adequate, accurate and timely information to inform national health planning and decision making, reduction in morbidity and mortality due to communicable and chronic non-communicable diseases and HIV/AIDS, health legislation and regulations reviewed and updated.

Mr. Speaker, I give this background to endorse the fact that the primary objective of the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment is the provision of top quality primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare services in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Mr. Speaker, this is the foundation of the operation of the Ministry and as such we are required, it is our responsibility to do all that is in our power to ensure that that top quality service is delivered. If we look at the history of mankind we will see that over the years challenges would have arisen in many forms and fashions where the issue of health is concerned. Some of these are caused by agents’ viruses and bacteria and these challenges continue even up to today.

If we ourselves recall not too many years ago we would remember the days when we were in school even before we are in school after school, when we were afflicted by measles, small pox, mumps, whooping cough, polio, cholera, tuberculosis, tetanus etc. these provided serious challenges not only to the health systems, but also to the economies particularly of small developing states like ours and I can see persons in our midst today with that flashback in their eyes, because they recalled those challenges that existed not too long ago.

In fact, I glanced very briefly at a book there on Doctor Eric Williams of Trinidad and Tobago and it was noted that when he was born in September of 1911 there was an outbreak of small pox in Trinidad and Tobago and there were certain challenges in terms of him being registered, his birth being registered and it took them 12 days to do that because of that outbreak of small pox. What has happened since then, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members? The pioneers in the medical field would have set about to examine and come up with solutions to tackle these challenges. It was not influenced by politics, not influenced by religion, not influenced by colour, creed, class or social status. That research allowed them to look at the causes of these various challenges and to come up with solutions and one such mechanism that they came up to mitigate against these challenges would have been vaccination and immunisation.

What is the process of vaccination and immunisation? The individual is injected or they ingest a form of the substance that creates these challenges in the first case and when the body is ingested with this substance it builds up an immunity and therefore if the challenge arises to this individual anytime later and that is on an ongoing basis, that they will be able to resist the attack of the challenges of these various diseases. Now Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, it is important that we understand the effects of this process to our society, small developing societies over the years. What used to plague us many years ago in many cases has been wiped out, but mainly control and managed in our part of the world and many other parts of the world.

In St. Vincent and the Grenadines the Ministry of Health, Public Service and the hard workers of the Ministry of Health, they have ensured that they have put in place all of the necessary mechanisms for us to continue to

manage this process carefully. And I can refer to a card that has been formulated by the Ministry since January 2010 and this card addresses many aspects of the welfare of the children of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. It captures the personal information of the child, the health history of the family of the child and it gives the information of the National Immunisation relative to the various doses that that child would have been exposed to over the early stages of life. It goes even further and captures the dental information and the overall development of the child, including providing charts to allow the parents of the children and the health professionals to follow the progress and development of the child, but more importantly to ensure that that child receives all of the necessary doses that would allow it to live a healthy life and not be afflicted by the various diseases.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot take the health of our children for granted. We cannot leave to chance, we have to ensure that we are responsible in our actions and that we provide all of the necessary protection measures to allow our children to grow up and live healthy lives. Before a child is admitted to school it is required for that child to present the necessary card to show that immunisation has been completed or that they are in the process of immunisation. Earlier on we heard that where immunisation is concerned we are close to 100 percent successful in that regard and if for example with our school systems we ensure that that is required that they have to show that have been immunised it means that we are not only safeguarding that individual's child, but we are preventing the spread of that disease throughout that school system and the length and breadth of St. Vincent and the Grenadines [applause].

It is also well known that if a child has to leave the shores of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and journey overseas to go into schools there the same obtains for university, they have to provide that certificate to show that they have been properly immunised. So what are we saying, are we asking our children, our parents and the health system not to ensure that our children are able to provide that certificate and get into school or university? It goes further than that, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, a gentleman came to me recently, he was in his seventies and his child would have applied for him to get permanent residence in North America and the authorities up there requested that he provide a certificate to show that he has been immunised. Are we saying to our people that even at that age that they should not have that opportunity to join their family and loved ones so that they can spend some time with them overseas, because they are not immunised? Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I dear say that the answer to that should be no, no, no.

And that is why Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, that we have taken this question of immunisation very seriously. We did not overnight come up with the fact that we need to immunise, we have been guided by professionals, medical professionals, we have been guided by the World Health Organisation and PAHO, they have done the necessary research over many years and they have come up with best practice where immunisation and vaccination is concerned. They are the professionals they have the expertise and the capacity to do these research. So are we not to rely on them? It is tried and tested, tried, tried and tested, best practiced and I would want to feel that if this is so based on their research that we can safely go along with that.

It is for this reason, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, that on the 23<sup>rd</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup> of this month, of April that WHO (the World Health Organisation) would celebrate vaccination week in the Americas. I daresay that we

would want to be part of this process, we would want to ensure that we provide that responsible leadership to the children and the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines [applause].

Mr. Speaker, I indicated in the beginning that the objective is one and only one to provide top quality healthcare to the people of this nation and if we are to agree to this Bill today to add Hepatitis B and Haemophilus Influenza B if we are to add these two items to the schedule and we are to ensure that we continue to provide the card that captures that doses relative to vaccination for our children and at the end of the doses that a certificate is issued that that child can present, the parents can present any part of the world and that we move on in the not too distant future as part of our health information system to capture that information on that system. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I think we would be heading in the right direction and we would be providing that leadership that the people of this country have voted us to provide. I am speaking there and I flash also to the fact in terms of the provision of top quality healthcare in this country that we now have on the ground a CT scan and that in the next two days we will have the experts on the ground here to assist us with the installation of that machine [applause]. Mr. Speaker, having given all this information I want to wish this Bill a safe passage through this House, thank you [applause].

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Any further debate, Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs.

**HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I do not think it will be proper of me not to participate in this debate and in my former life and I continue that part of my life. I am a public health physician and events recently in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in the media have really made me think more passionately about my professionalism as a public health practitioner, but I am here today debate this Bill not only as a public health physician, but as a politician, a policy maker.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I think my Honourable friend has given good reasons why we should make the amendment to this Bill, but I want to take the opportunity to reinforce his debate and it is really sad, I am..., before I heard the Honourable Prime Minister said well the Opposition is not here and we are able to get through our work quickly, but I really wanted them to be here for this debate. I seriously hope that they are listening.

Mr. Speaker, we are here making amendment to add formally to a list of vaccine preventable diseases Hepatitis B vaccine and Haemophilus Influenza type B, you call it “HaeB” and I think it is important then that people should know a little more about them, so I will try and to do so briefly. Hepatitis B is a viral infection which is communicable; it is very infectious even more so than HIV, in other words it can be easily as people say, caught, and especially healthcare professionals.

Hepatitis B is an infection that attacks mainly the liver. There are different types of Hepatitis that is inflammation of the liver, but this one attacks, this is called Hepatitis B and the reason why it is very important is that an infection of Hepatitis B can cause some serious complications including death and often before it causes death it can cause cirrhosis of the liver which may lead to cancer of the liver and ultimate death.

Mr. Speaker, therefore, any measure that can be used to prevent this should be strongly supported and we know the old adage [applause] “an ounce of prevention is better than a whole pound of cure”, but I will tell you, in healthcare delivery the World Health Organisation repeats that their best investment in healthcare historically is the utilisation of immunisation and if WHO say so, I take it as so. Mr. Speaker, Hepatitis B can be transmitted by needle stick and that is why it is of danger to healthcare workers. It can be transmitted from mother to infant during childbirth because there are a lot of fluids. Once there is blood and fluids it can be transmitted among children during play time, so mothers, parents listen to this, another child might be infected or be a carrier of the disease and if your child is not immunised they can be infected. So that is why I am taking some time to explain to the Honourable House, and to those who are listening, the importance of this vaccine and I have explained already the complications, okay. Go home those of you who have internet, Google Hepatitis B, read for yourself. Because there are some people you know who because a politician say so, it is not so. If that politician is not on the side they support, so if you do not believe what I say here, go and look for yourself.

The next disease condition for which we are adding, Haemophilus Influenza type B; do not be fooled by their names, it is not any influenza, it is a bacteria, this is interesting because it is not one of the flues it is a bacteria that causes some serious illness especially in children, it causes meningitis that is an infection of the brain and that part of the body and such a pneumonia, it causes a serious pneumonia which is an infection of the respiratory system, the lungs and both of them can and do cause death. Up to 10 percent of persons with that infection not properly treated will die. In fact Mr. Speaker, in the world in the year 2000 over 2.3 million persons had serious diseases and over half a million children or persons died of that disease.

Now these are figures people must understand these things and I will come later as to why I am so passionate about it. Mr. Speaker, even if you do not die, the complications of these diseases include as I said, brain damage. So if your child gets infected because he/she did not take the immunisation, the doctors might be able to give him some antibiotics and they live, but they may live with brain damage and that child will not be able to acquire and develop its fullest potential academically and otherwise. They can also, and I want to talk about some other vaccines like MMR that is mumps, measles and Rubella vaccine and that is one that is causing quite a little debate which I will mention later, because these diseases can cause deafness, brain damage also and therefore it is important that people understand. Because when persons who are ignorant of the scientific facts, people who we cannot allow, Mr. Speaker, people who belong to religious fanatic groups, who in my opinion and I state it, they are infected with some gross ignorance of scientific facts of these issues, they go and speak nonsense.

Mr. Speaker, I have seen in the media and I have spoken about this in this Honourable House before and I expected leadership to come from the Opposition because, Mr. Speaker, I cannot see how a Leader of the Opposition in today’s world when all this information is available, can allow a member of their party who is now today being pushed in the leadership of that party to be speaking the ignorance on such an important matter. Leadership is much more about being a Prime Minister or Leader of the Opposition. If you are placed there to lead in your capacity, people must not be allowed to speak nonsense.

Mr. Speaker, indeed there are some problems with vaccines sometimes. But the World Health Organisation in 1999 in recognition of that; has set up a body, an international body to do certain research on any vaccine and I

must say there have been problems. There is a problem for example in 1976 there was an outbreak of swine flu and vaccine used for that swine flu was later found to be associated with some complications including deaths [interjection] oh yes, but when they did a thorough study of that disease, I think 25 persons died, but that is after administering over 44 million vaccines. What is interesting is that in 1918 (and these are important figures) there was an outbreak of a similar swine flu that killed over 20 million people. Now let us do the math. If there is a problem with a batch of the vaccine and the studies are not even very conclusive, the studies did show what we call a casual relationship to the administration of the vaccine, 25 persons died, but the later figure that there may have been a contamination of that particular vaccine, so yes, we have had some unfortunate events but that is not to say you must stop using vaccine.

Then there is the much touted, and I want you to remember this name, go home and Google it, Dr. Andrew Wakefield -- and this is where the argument, this is where people must really, they say a little learning is a dangerous thing, think deeper, touch not the Pierian's Spring, if you only have limited information, it is not sufficient to go and make an argument and that position and that is what is happening.

Dr. Andrew Wakefield is a British physician from both his parents, so right down the name and Google it, both his parents were outstanding physicians. This gentleman in February 1998 published a paper linking the use of the MMR vaccine to autism; you might have heard that word. Autism is disease affecting children where..., and it is not so uncommon these days, the children may start developing normally and then they just regressed, they start doing repeated actions and sometimes they may lose their speech and you know they are just not normal. Go and research it, I do not have enough time to give all the details, but that is enough.

Now, this man produced a paper in a very prestigious medical journal, "the Lancet", it is one of the world's top magazines, where according to him there was a linkage between the administration of MMR vaccine and autism in about 12 children and you could imagine the furor that caused, because if it is in fact true, MMR is one of the vaccine that are given the world over, but the side is some people figured, well no, this is..., something ain't sound right here and they started..., groups of scientists in Japan and the United States and the UK among other countries started trying to replicate his research and they could not find any linkage. You know in 2004 they just could not keep it down and they did some research. They found out that the whole thing was a farce. These are one of the arguments that many religious groups and anti-vaccine people are using, because they did not know that..., because it was just recently the Lancet was post in 2010 to retract that study. In fact, so much so that some people were compensated. You know one of the things they found, Dr. Wakefield was paid by a group, an anti vaccine group 400,000 pounds sterling, not only that he treated on the information and that was fun, 12 of his colleagues who did the research later confessed. Mr. Speaker, this is information that those who are talking do not know, did not bother to read more and they are out there misleading and it is dangerous. Because you know, Mr. Speaker, this Dr. Wakefield research caused a significant decrease in immunisation rate in the UK with a result of thousands of deaths of children who otherwise would have been immunised. We do not want and cannot afford for that to happen in St. Vincent and the Grenadines [applause].

So Mr. Speaker, it is important that we understand what is happening here, because we boost..., I want listeners to know Mr. Speaker, the immunisation rate in St. Vincent and the Grenadines is better than the immunisation in the United States of America [applause] and who doubt me about that, go and check for themselves because

again, they believe that when we make these statements they think that we make them lightly you know. That is one of the success stories.

Mr. Speaker, you know the region of the America is the most outstanding area in immunisation coverage in all of the WHO areas. We have eliminated polio, now you tell me, you want to go and tell people do not use immunisation, because they did not live around the time when polio used to be around? Well there are still people around who have suffered from polio and with respect I will call a name, my good friend Mr. Burgin, you think he would have preferred that his parents would have liked to see him like that? Eh? Measles is a thing of the past. Most of the new doctors now and I saw Doctor Miguel this morning, they do not know what measles is.

Mr. Speaker, I speak with this with passion because I went through medical school and did not know what measles was. I remember as a little boy hearing about measles, but I could not remember. In 1989 in Jamaica where I worked, there was an outbreak, I could remember one day seeing 13 cases confirmed and in fact, my masters thesis had..., I so impressed that is why I am talking so passionately. I did my masters thesis in public health on immunisation, because you see that same document you have there, we call it a passport. I made it mandatory in the clinic that I worked that all parents bringing children must bring their immunisation card for us to upgrade, for us to assess their status of immunisation, because when I saw the amount of suffering including some complications and death from just measles, I was moved to do what I think was necessary. That is why I am now moved to debate this motion, to encourage parents, do not listen to the nonsense out there by those who are encouraging you not to immunise your children. The science is strong. The WHO is a responsible organisation. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the science is so strong that it even overrides politics.

Mr. Speaker, do know that, well I am certain you do, but for those who are listening who may not know, the United States of America has a trade embargo on Cuba for over forty plus years now. There is a vaccine developed by the Cubans, a meningococcus B vaccine, it is the only country in the world that has developed it. In the United States about 3000 children die each year from that disease and they do not have a vaccine for it..., well they did not. That fact caused the American Congress to basically in a special case revoked the blockade, the United States Treasury had to give a special license to allow Smithkline Beecham an American subsidiary based in Belgium to further produce and make that vaccine available to the United States. You think if they did not believe that the vaccine was important that they would have done that? It is one of the few cases where they have pulled back on the blockade in Cuba.

So if the big great United States and again Google that and you will see for yourself. In fact, there is an article if Cuba has this vaccine, why can't we? It is because the Cubans believe in bio-technology and they have real invested. There are other vaccines that they invested in. In fact, the same one "HeaB" Haemophilus Influenza type B, they have made, they have developed a special one that is cheaper and with less side effects. Talking of side effects, almost anything that you take into your body that is not normal and natural has some side effects, even as aspirin. You can take an aspirin and drop dead tomorrow, does that mean you must not take aspirin, eh, does it mean you must stop take aspirin?

One of the greatest inventions they found in a development was the penicillin antibiotics, but if we are to do a census here, I am sure you might have about 3 or 4 people allergic to penicillin. Does it mean you must not use it? So, if you hear there are some problems, let us try and deal with the problems. Do not go and advocate that you must not use immunisation. It is really..., Mr. Speaker, I hurt that that message was sent because I debated and mentioned that issue here in the Honourable House before and I think that there is a responsibility on those who want to lead in this country. Could you imagine, Mr. Speaker, a Government with a Member of its Cabinet who is opposing the use of immunisation? Could you imagine if that Member is the Minister of Health or as that Member hopes to be the first female Prime Minister? We are in serious trouble.

Mr. Speaker, this is serious business and the Prime Minister says it in jest sometimes, but politics is all serious business. You cannot have people wanting to lead people and talking nonsense like this and it is repeated, that is what is hurtful. So Mr. Speaker, this Bill is important [applause]. All of us in our own way must encourage people to have their children immunised. Many children in Africa and other developing countries do not have the benefit of..., we are adding on these two and we will be adding on more as they develop. Mr. Speaker, there are times when you whole back, for example when they had the outbreak of H1N1 flu, they made vaccines available to us; I was infected with that disease. I came down with it. Mr. Speaker, we did not, because we did some epidemiological studies that is the trend of the disease and we thought boy, for the cost and you know the disease was not so serious by the time it got down here, we did not bother with it that is not to say we are opposed to vaccine, because if there is another outbreak and people start getting seriously ill and die, we will use it. You have to be judicious about the use of it. Do not go out there and say, vaccines not good and this and that. Mr. Speaker, I think I have made my point. I hope, that is why I said I really wish that the Opposition was here and I hope that their spokesperson on health and the Leader of the Opposition would address this matter, because it is one of national security, oh yes, it is one of national interest and it should be beyond frivolous partisan politics and if you do not know enough, keep quiet. I am much obliged, Mr. Speaker [applause].

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Any further debate, it does not seem so. Honourable Minister of Health, no further debate you can wind up.

**HONOURABLE CECIL MC KIE:** Mr. Speaker, I move that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to consider this Bill clause by clause.

**HONOURABLE CECIL MC KIE:** Mr. Speaker, I move that the Committee rise, House resumed and the Honourable Member report to the House.

**House went into Committee.**

**House Resumed.**

**Bill reported and read without amendment.**

**HONOURABLE CECIL MC KIE:** Mr. Speaker, move that the Bill be read a third time by title and passed.

**HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

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

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, it is 7:20 p.m. perhaps an appropriate time to have a break for Members convenience, we return at 7:45 p.m. or as soon thereafter as we gather everyone to come back in. I so move that the Honourable House be suspended for that period.

**Question put and agreed to.**  
**House suspended at 7:25 p. m. (Break)**  
**House Resumed 8:15 p.m.**

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Pray be seated. All right we resume our meeting. When we took the break we have just concluded the Immunisation of Children Act.

18. **ARCHITECTS BILL, 2011**

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Minister of Transport and Works has the carriage of this Bill, but as you know, he has left us to attend a funeral and I have been asked by him to proceed with the first reading and we will have a Select Committee.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move that a Bill for an Act to provide for the establishment of an Architects Council to make provisions for the registration of Architects, to regulate the practice of Architects and the practices of architecture by organisations and to provide for matters incidental thereto and connected therewith be read a first time. The objects and reasons of the Bill are contained in the long title.

**HONOURABLE CLAYTON BURGIN:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

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

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, the Select Committee I suggest the following five Members in addition of course to the Honourable Attorney General.

The Honourable Minister of Transport and Works.  
The Honourable Minister of Housing and Lands  
The Honourable Minister of Tourism and Industry  
The Honourable Parliamentary Secretary in the Office of the Prime Minister  
The Honourable Senator David Browne  
The Honourable Attorney General

The Opposition Mr. Speaker would be asked to name three or four persons as they see fit.

19. **STATUS OF CHILDREN BILL, 2011**

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Member for South Windward.

**HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to move the second reading of the Status of Children Bill, 2011.

**HONOURABLE CLAYTON BURGIN:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a second time.**

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Debate on the Bill.

**HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I am indeed very happy today that this piece of legislation is before the House to be passed at this sitting along with the Immunisation of Children Act and as you can see this Government is doing everything in order in a decent and practical manner. We are celebrating during this month, Mr. Speaker, child abuse awareness and prevention month under the theme, “Inspiring families through positive changes for a better society.” And Mr. Speaker, the Status of Children Bill is one of four pieces of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States model family Bills which constitutes an integral part of the family law and domestic violence reform project.

The three other draft Bills are the Children Care and Adoption Bill, Juvenile Justice Bill and the Domestic Violence Bill. The Children Care and Adoption Bill was passed in this said House of Parliament on August 30, 2010 and was assented to by the Governor General on the 7<sup>th</sup> October, 2010. The Status of Children Bill is now having its second reading and this was thoroughly discussed in a Select Committee Meeting held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2011 and I want to commend the Members of the Select Committee for their thorough work in this Bill that we have before us today.

Mr. Speaker, I want to give some background information in relation to this Bill, as I have stated before, it is part of four pieces of OECS model family bills which constitutes an integral part of the family law and domestic violence reform project. The family law and domestic violence reform project started in 2002 as part of the Eastern Caribbean Legal and Judicial Reform Initiative and was based on the premise that there was need to reform and modernise areas of family law in the sub-region of the OECS Member States.

The modernised family Bill seeks to replace existing family laws in Member States such as our own state, St. Vincent and the Grenadines as the impetus for a modernised judicial and legislative system with a capacity to result family related matters in a more holistic manner, thus ensuring equity and greater access to justice for all families in our region. And so the Status of Children Bill seeks to provide for reform legislation here in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and to remove all discrimination against children born out of wedlock and to provide equally for them as those children born in marriage and Mr. Speaker, you remember we used to call

these children lawful and bastards [laughter] and today we are saying, this Unity Labour Party Government is saying that there would be no more lawful and no more bastard children in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The state of St. Vincent and the Grenadines became a signatory to the UN Charter on the Convention on the rights of the child in January 1993 and we ratified that Convention later on in that year. This Convention aptly sets out all rights which children are and should be entitled to and so I refer to Article 2 of that said Convention which provides as follows:

State parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction with discrimination of kind, irrespective of the child's or his/her parents or legal guardians race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or status. This Convention therefore assumes no discrimination between children born in or out of wedlock and there is no discrimination between the parents of such children.

Article 7 of that Convention further states, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, it provides among other things for the rights of the child to know and to care for by both parents and Article 9 sub-section (3) provides that state parties shall respect the rights of the child who is separated from one or both parents to maintain personal relations and direct contact with both parents on a regular basis.

This Bill, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, seeks also to equate the rights of the mother of a child born out of wedlock to that of the father and provide for a most substantive role of the putative father and his ability to exercise rights as provided for in the Convention on the rights of the child. This Bill also seeks to abolish common rule of construction against children born out of wedlock for succession purposes.

And Mr. Speaker, I want to turn swiftly to page 65 of the manifesto of the Unity Labour Party which is a document of this House and it states there, the family and society and under page 65 we there, in the next five years, the Unity Labour Party Government will strengthen the institutional capacity of the various agencies of Government which work in his broad policy area including the Family Affairs Division so as to better execute Government's policies. To implement fully the recently enacted Child Care and Adoption Bill and I want to refer to another, to adopt all relevant international Convention regarding women, children, the protection of the elderly and persons with disabilities.

You see Mr. Speaker, this Unity Labour Party Government takes a holistic approach from children to parents to ensure that this country continues to be fully developed and all our peoples are fully taken care of. Mr. Speaker, this is what we refer to as good Government and vision for the future [applause]. I want to refer just briefly to some statistics from the Statistical Division in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning for the period 2007 to 2009.

In that period, Mr. Speaker, a total of 5628 children were born in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, I will now give you some comparative figures as to legitimate, lawful children and illegitimate, the bastard children during this period;

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** As they used to call them.

**HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON:** As they used to call them, yes. In 2007 there were a total of 1,822 registered births, 258 legitimate or lawful children 1,564 illegitimate children...

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** ...out of wedlock

**HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON:** ...out of wedlock yes I will prefer that, yes. In 2008 there were 1,901 births those born in wedlock 314 and those out of wedlock was 1,587. In 2009 there were 1,905 births, those born in wedlock 299, and those out of wedlock 1,606. You see, Mr. Speaker, over that three year period 871 children were born in wedlock compare to 4,757 out of wedlock. The 4,757 and the thousands more who were born out of wedlock certainly did not ask to be born, Mr. Speaker, they did not ask the parents to bring them into the world, they are human beings, Mr. Speaker and are Vincentians and they also hold the highest office of citizen in this our fair land [applause].

Mr. Speaker, it is just not right for these children to be disadvantaged because of their status at birth and so Mr. Speaker, the Status of Children Bill therefore seeks to recognise all children whether born in wedlock or out of wedlock and are to be entitled the same rights [applause]. I am much obliged, Mr. Speaker [applause].

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Any further debate on the Bill? No further debate.

**HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask that the Status of Children Bill be read a third time by title and passed.

**HONOURABLE CLAYTON BURGIN:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

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

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, in respect of the last item which is on the Order Paper, Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill, as I indicated it is at the Select Committee, but speaking with the Honourable Attorney General and in light of the fact the Christian Council they have asked that they want to continue to study the Bill, thought that at this level of the House we do have the authority, we can agree to postpone the date for the Select Committee from May 5<sup>th</sup> to June 9<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m. So there will be an additional month to allow the Christian Council to do their assessment. Mr. Speaker, that will give the light to those who say that we want to rush this Bill, it has to do something with cases before the court, absolutely nothing like that.

Mr. Speaker, may I just say by way of a comment as to how we are proceeding. The Status of Children Bill came to this Honourable House before the last General Elections and we in fact, we were asked to put it to a Select Committee by the Opposition, we did so, the elections came, the Select Committee did not meet, the Bill naturally fell because the House was dissolved. We brought it back here, we put it again to Select Committee, I have been advised that they did not attend the Select Committee and today they are not here to debate the Status of Children Bill. I want just to bear this in mind, Mr. Speaker, the day when the Honourable Mike Browne then Minister for Social Development wanted to proceed with the Bill, because he wanted to complete that as part of his own legacy, they pleaded for the Bill not to be debated that day. That Bill had been circulated for some time, it had been put in the newspapers, they asked, I remember the Honourable Member for the Northern Grenadines pleading, I said, okay let us do it if the Bar Association and other people want to put in and the Opposition want to study it more that is fine.

You have noticed that would have given all the time for the study. They did not attend the Select Committee and they are not here in Parliament to debate it. I just want the public to be aware of these things and show the extent to which on serious pieces of legislation, this Government bends over backwards to accommodate all kinds of inputs, I just want to make that point in this regard

Mr. Speaker, we are going to have a day in the month of May 24<sup>th</sup>, the Attorney General's Chambers has some work to do on certain Bills and that will give them enough time and for the draftspersons who have been doing an excellent job who are here with us.

Accordingly I beg to move that this Honourable House do stand adjourned until Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> May, 2011 at 10:00 a.m.

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

**Question put and agreed to.  
House adjourned at 8:40 p.m.  
Until Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2011 at 10:00 a.m.**