

**No. 5**

**Thursday**

**Second Session**

**12<sup>th</sup> Thursday, 2012**

**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 FOURTH MEETING, SECOND 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.**

**FIFTH SITTING**

**12<sup>th</sup> JANUARY, 2012**

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

The Honourable House of Assembly met at 9:10 a.m. in the Assembly Chamber, Court House, Kingstown.

**PRAYERS**

**MR. SPEAKER IN THE CHAIR**

Honourable Hendrick Alexander

**Present**

**MEMBERS OF CABINET**

Prime Minister, Minister of Finance,  
Economic Planning, National Security,  
Grenadines and Legal Affairs  
Dr. the Honourable Ralph Gonsalves

Member for North Central Windward

Attorney General  
Honourable Judith Jones-Morgan

Minister of Education/ Deputy  
Prime Minister  
Honourable Girlyn Miguel

Member for Marriaqua

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

Member for East St. George

Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and Rural Transformation Honourable Montgomery Daniel	Member for North Windward
Minister of Tourism and Industry Honourable Saboto Caesar	Member for South Central Windward
Minister of Health, Wellness and The Environment Honourable Cecil McKie	Member for West St. George
Minister of National Reconciliation Labour, Information and Ecclesiastical Affairs Honourable Maxwell Charles	Member for Central Leeward
Minister of National Mobilisation, Social Development, the Family, Persons with Disabilities, Youths, Sports and Culture Honourable Frederick Stephenson	Member for South Windward
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade And Consumer Affairs Honourable Dr. Douglas Slater	Government Senator
Minister of Transport and Works, Urban Development and Local Government Honourable Julian Francis	Government Senator
Parliamentary Secretary in the Office Of the Prime Minister Honourable Elvis Charles	Government Senator
Honourable David Browne	Government Senator/ Deputy Speaker

### **OTHER MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE**

Honourable Arnhim Eustace Leader of the Opposition	Member for East Kingstown
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Dr. the Honourable Godwin Friday	Member for Northern Grenadines
Honourable Terrance Ollivierre	Member for Southern Grenadines
Honourable St. Claire Leacock	Member for Central Kingstown
Honourable Daniel Cummings	Member for West Kingstown
Honourable Roland Matthews	Member for North Leeward
Honourable Nigel Stephenson	Member for South Leeward
Honourable Vynnette Frederick	Opposition Senator
Honourable Anesia Baptiste	Opposition Senator

# SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

### BUDGET DEBATE

THURSDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2012

#### PRAYERS

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Pray be seated.

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

#### Question put and agreed to

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Minister of Health, Wellness and the Environment, Representative for West St. George.

**HONOURABLE CECIL MCKIE:** I am just asking for an indication when I get to 45 minutes.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Forty-five; when you get there? Okay, fine.

**HONOURABLE CECIL MCKIE:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to add my voice to the debate of 2012 Budget document as presented and laid before this Honourable House. I want to say special thanks to Almighty God, the constituents of West St George, the Honourable Prime Minister and the government of St Vincent and the Grenadines who have all afforded me this opportunity to contribute to this debate this morning. Mr. Speaker, the Members who would have spoken before me would have all given a vivid description of the times in which we exist today and I would not go over the fact that we are experiencing hard times. I would however like to congratulate the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance, the Budget Director and their team for a wonderful job in coming up with a budget that is appropriate for the times in which we exist [knocking on the desk] I would like also to congratulate my own Ministry for identifying the priorities in our Ministry taking into account the limitations of finances available to us, and coming up with appropriate programmes and projects for 2012.

Mr. Speaker, when the going gets tough, the tough gets going. That is a signal that is a message that I and I am sure all persons on this side would have received from our leader and we have adjusted ourselves accordingly.

If we allow the times to get to us they will get us, this is a time for belt tightening and not belt choking. The Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment has been identified as a focal Ministry for 2012; we are aware of the fact that some \$64.9 million on the Recurrent side would have been allocated to us; \$2.4 million more than last year, and \$17.5 million on the Capital side or just about \$4 million more than 2011. We understand our responsibilities as a focal Ministry and we take them seriously.

Mr. Speaker, in the very early stages of the ULP administration the initiative would have been taken not only to look at the budget presentation for a particular year and compare it with the year before, but the administration decided that we needed to look two years down the year. What this has allowed is for the comparative to be made, our reflection for concentration on the year ahead, for vision for the future years ahead and for continuity in terms of operation of programmes, projects and the Ministry. I suspect that this process is causing some difficulty for the Members on the other side because if we have to come here and look at our programmes for this year, next year and the year after, of course next year we will have to come and speak about the programme that continues. I think that they are getting confused that when we do that it is the same old, same old Budget.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment, we look at things in a holistic fashion, if a baby is not well fed growth will be stunted and development slow. If a child is not well that child will not learn. If a worker is ill he or she will not produce. If there is an outbreak of a disease the entire system may have to be shut down, and if our nation is not well we will not grow, develop or modernise, and that is why in his wisdom the Prime Minister of St Vincent and the Grenadines and the Ministry of Finance would have allocated 10% of the national purse to the Ministry of Health Wellness and the Environment. [Knocking the desk]

Mr. Speaker, as a Ministry if we reflect on the year 2011 and as a country if we do the same what can we reflect on? St Vincent and the Grenadines has been recognised regionally for our good public health, data collection and practices for 2012. We can boast that our immunization record is at a desirable 100%; that our infant mortality rate is below the required international rate; the same for our parent mortality and morbidity rates. We can point to the fact that we now have a CT scan machine at the Milton Cato Hospital that would be able to produce one hundred procedures; [knocking the desk] that we hosted seventeen medical missions in 2011, with the major Scoliosis Mission being the most valuable mission ever to be conducted in St Vincent and the Grenadines; that our Pediatric Programme is a template for the region; that our Pharmaceutical Procurement Programme is good and we continue to satisfy over 90% of patient demand in this area, which is above the 85% international standard. That we made significant progress in the elimination of CSEs' by banning household items that still carry this dangerous substance. That we are developing a programme on managing existing chemicals and those entering our country; that our Central Water and Sewage Authority is one of the best operated in the region and our water quality, waste disposal and our solid waste management have all been highly commended; that our nurse is the best in the region and that our batch for 2011 achieved a record obtaining 100% passes in the regional examinations.

That we have achieved 86% implementation rate on our PAHO programmes the best in the OECS [knocking the desk]. That we should return to positive growth this year in the economy because our people are producing goods and services; because they are healthy and that sweet St Vincent and the Grenadines would have been recognised in the top five nations in the world as a vacation spot for 2012, also we are recognised by five other

institutions. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to mention those up front because I did not want them to get lost in the details that I would provide as I go along. Mr. Speaker, as a Ministry we can therefore look back with pride on our accomplishment but we also recognised that there is a lot more to be done and we have to all put our hands to the wheel. I will touch on a lot more details as I go along my presentation.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment, we have eighteen programmes to manage for the year 2012. In our management and implementation of these various programmes we have to be conscious of the delivery of ever improving primary, secondary and tertiary health care to our people and visitors, strengthening of our systems, structures, procedures and protocol, expand our facilities, develop plant, machinery, furniture and fixtures and equipment and develop capacity. We have to do all of this while taking into account our educational sector, our sporting sector, cultural sector, social development, agriculture, housing and all of the sectors. We have to take into consideration what is happening across these sectors because our Ministry is an all encompassing Ministry that cuts across all other sectors.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that I ask the nation and those of the House of Assembly today to follow my presentation because in the year 2012, we are going to ask every single Vincentian to be part of the process where health, wellness and the environment is concerned. So, my presentation would be divided into several section, we will look at planning in the Ministry, administration, facilities, furniture, fixtures and equipment, building capacity, programmes and services. All of this information would be drawn from the budget presentation that has been laid before the House. Mr. Speaker, looking back with pride at 2011, we look forward with anticipation and excitement to fulfilling our mandate for 2012 even as we look ahead through the years 2013 and 2014.

### **Planning**

Mr. Speaker, let us look first of all at the area of planning, one of the more important initiatives taken over the last two years is to move the physical location of the Health Planner and Assistant to the physical location of the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment. What has this done? It has allowed more intimate process in terms of planning and implementation. It has allowed for greater participation by the various units and by the administration in the process of planning. It has allowed for easy swift adjustment in our programmes as we implement our programmes. It has allowed us to analyse what is taking place before us and make any necessary adjustments. What this has allowed, Mr. Speaker, is for approach to be targeted systematically and I daresay that we have been seeing the results of this approach as we go forward as a Ministry, which is critical as we attempt to carry out eighteen programmes and sub-programmes during the course of the year.

### **Administration**

Let us link the whole question of planning with that of administration. Mr. Speaker, over the year 2011, which will be continuing in 2012, we will ensure that we continue to look at some critical aspects of administration, protocol of attending meetings, workshops, seminars overseas, the whole question of reporting when persons attend these sessions overseas upon their return. We have looked at and will continue to look at the question of meetings scheduled to ensure that all units and all departments continue to meet and discuss and involve their workers so that we can have persons being better able to identify with the programmes and the projects before

them. The whole question of reporting: that the units and departments report as they are supposed to; so that everyone can be on the same page as we discuss the programmes going forward.

The whole question of protocol in administrations that persons understand the protocol, and adhere to them and that everyone understands what their responsibilities are. The objective, Mr. Speaker, is for transparency, accountability, good management, practices and good governance across the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment.

Mr. Speaker, two additional instruments in the Ministry would allow us to better perform our duties as we go forward into 2012. During the year we hope that we will be able to establish a legislative framework for the provision of healthcare in the Ministry that would better guide us as we carry out our programmes. And starting two years ago we commenced implementing the health information system which I am sure would lead to an emphasis on data collection, availability of patient data, which of course would be protected, information sharing, information analysis, reporting responsibilities, data interpretation, planning and implementation. Translated Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, this means greater efficiency, professionalism and enhanced delivery of service.

### **Facilities**

Mr. Speaker, let us look at the whole question of facilities, over the year 2011 we were able to look at several facilities throughout the Ministry, we did quite a lot of work on the Modern Medical Complex at Georgetown, the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital, the Plant and Equipment and we started the Bequia Clinic. What do we hope to look at for the year 2012? The Modern Medical Complex at Georgetown is going to be a very important facility going forward, not only would it be able to offer a wide range of services particularly in the area of dialysis but it will also provide the opportunity to be a learning institution as we increase our pool of medical colleges here in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Mr. Speaker, this project is going a little slower than we expected but we hope to make significant advances in 2012, we have some \$5 million assigned to it and that project should be completed this year for operationalisation. During my visit along with the team with the Prime Minister to Cuba in September last year we were able to advance discussions with the Ministry of Health in Cuba on the whole question of equipping that facility and staffing that facility. Some thirty-two persons with professional experience and technical training should be able to work with us over the next couple of years even as we train our persons from St Vincent and the Grenadines to take up those positions. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we also had discussions with them with the possibility of training our personnel to be able to take up positions in that institution as well and these discussions are well advanced.

### **Medical Facility**

Mr. Speaker, let us look at the medical facility on Bequia; last year utilizing local funds 20% and funds through the BNTF 80% from the CDB we were able to make significant progress on the construction of a health clinic on Bequia and upon its completion we would move into renovations of the Bequia Hospital. [Knocking the desk] What do we expect from the health clinic? An examination room, pharmacy, dressing room, laundry,

nurses' station, common room, two temporary beds to be utilized when the Bequia Hospital renovation begins and significant water storage.

The Bequia Hospital what will renovations bring that facility to? Two additional beds would be added making a total of sixteen to cater for maternity, pediatric, male and female wards. There will be a delivery room as it is now, first time mothers delivering babies have to come up to St Vincent and the Grenadines when this facility is completed they would be able to have their babies on Bequia. [Knocking on desk] There will be a covered waiting room, a dental unit, an A&E room, operating theatre, receiving room, administrative quarters for one doctor and two nurses, separate kitchen and dining room facilities and that facility should be completed in 2013.

Mr. Speaker, I was a bit disappointed at the comments of the Honourable Member for the Northern Grenadines yesterday when the Member of the Northern Grenadines, when he omitted all of these realities the fact that he was seeing construction before his very eyes but choose to comment on missing bandages, missing pain killers, control of sheets and not even mentioning for one moment that this facility was being constructed. Mr. Speaker, I think all that was required was a call because these are obviously cases of management and those could have been corrected very swiftly. In fact, there is a resident doctor on Bequia and he made the point that there is no doctor but there is a doctor on Bequia and this situation could have been rectified very swiftly.

Mr. Speaker, let us look also at page 638 project 65101 and we are still under facilities. The tenth EDF would allow us to have available to us \$6 million of local funds, \$38 million of funds under the tenth EDF that we can use over a three-year period to modernise the health sector and make a difference to the lives of Vincentians. In 2011 we completed Stubbs Polyclinic. In 2012 we would commence polyclinics at Mesopotamia and Buccament at around \$4 million each. [Knocking on desk] These in fact would take the pressure off the central facility and main facility at the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital as we continue to diversify our services. Mr. Speaker, just to say that at the Stubbs Polyclinic while that clinic is up and running, in March this year we hope to expand the range of services offered there with two nurses available from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., two district medical officers from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., two pharmacists, a dental clinic will be available, x-ray and other services. [Knocking on desk]

Mr. Speaker, I think we should also look at the strategic locations of these polyclinics. One at Stubbs will cater for the residents in Stubbs and the surrounding areas and also be in close proximity to the International Airport that is being constructed at Argyle. The one on the Leeward side would cater for persons on that side of the island as well as being in close proximity to our single largest hospitality facility here in St Vincent and the Grenadines, and the one at Mesopotamia would cater for persons on the interior.

Mr. Speaker, under the tenth EDF as well some \$3 million will be available to construct four doctors quarters at Buccament, Mesopotamia, Chateaubelair and Sandy Bay, a staff hostel at Union Island and local funds would be available to upgrade the center at Campden Park.

### **Mental Health Facility**

Mr. Speaker, let us look at the Mental Health Facility. Some \$4 million will be made available for significant upgrades and refurbishing to that facility and to ensure that appropriate furniture, fixtures and equipment are put in place. Mr. Speaker, as a Ministry we recognise the importance of having appropriate environment for persons

to be able to make a speedy recovery and it is for this reason why attention is being given to this facility. Indeed, it is part of the wellness initiative that will go into full force for the year 2012. [Knocking on desk]

### **Milton Cato Memorial Hospital**

Mr. Speaker, at the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital we would also have significant funds available to us, both local funds and funds under the tenth EDF, and these funds would be used to upgrade the surgical ward area, upgrade the theatre, relocation of the kitchen, upgrade of the laundry, enhancing security, upgrading several other areas of that institution.

Mr. Speaker, let me just touch briefly on the question of relocation of the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital. In 2012 with assistance from PAHO and WHO we commenced work on doing the necessary research to identify our demographic and epidemiology profiles to be able to do the necessary work in that field. It started in 2011 and we will continue in 2012. Mr. Speaker, consultancy would allow us to look at the primary, secondary and tertiary delivery of health care in St Vincent and the Grenadines and when this is completed we will be able to make an assessment as to where we are and make a determination on where we need to go. It is important that we have the necessary data available to us to be able to move forward.

Mr. Speaker, some \$2 million would have been made available to us on page 640 programme 651001 to construct the Oxygen Plant right here in St Vincent and the Grenadines. This process started in 2011, in fact we have been aggressively trying to locate appropriate lands to construct this facility, we are running into some challenges to identify such appropriate land but our efforts will continue into 2012.

In my budget debate last year I would have indicated the importance of this facility because our cost, our expenses for our medical oxygen is extremely high, but Mr. Speaker, we did not rest on our laurels we proceeded and completed repairs to the Oxygen Plant at the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital. I am happy to be reporting that that Plant is up and operational again producing oxygen for the wards at the Hospital and filling bottles which we can store and have available for use. This is going to be very important, in fact we have already begun to see the first [inaudible] going southwards our cost is being reduced.

Mr. Speaker, the whole question of furniture, fixtures and equipment significant monies will be available to us, and if we check on page 638 projects 651102, 651104, 651101 and page 640 we will see that allocations are made for upgrades at a number of facilities in this regard.

Mr. Speaker; I should also mention that we have already sourced, a very important [piece] equipment for the Milton Cato Hospital a fluoroscopy machine with extra capabilities. I hope that we will be able to have this on land and be able to install it during the first half of this year so that we can again offer enhanced services at the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital. Mr. Speaker, the tenth EDF will allow us to purchase two ambulances, one vehicle for the nutrition unit, a vehicle for community nursing, and a vehicle for the Environmental Health Unit; so we utilized funds from the tenth EDF to achieve these objectives.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke about the CT-scan machine at the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital being up and running that machine was commissioned in August 2011 and five months later I can report to this House that over 100 scans would have been completed in different ranges. Mr. Speaker, if you look at what Vincentians had to pay

when they go overseas for this service: travel, accommodation, meals, the cost of scan itself, let us put it at around \$3,000. If we take out the cost of the scan here in St Vincent and the Grenadines because we have made it available at a cheaper rate than just about all the other countries, so, let us say the individual and the country is saving \$2,000 on each scan in five years we would have saved the individuals and the country close to quarter of a million dollars in five months. [Knocking on desk]

Mr. Speaker, this is indeed a tremendous achievement and we have gone on to ensure that two Vincentians would have been trained by GE over a month and they are now back home, and they will be able to offer maintenance services here with consultation of course with GE. And we brought in an application specialist and exposed our technicians here to training on the use of the CT-scan machine. In fact, during the first quarter of this year we would bring in another application specialist and again expose the persons who use and read the machines to training by the application specialist.

Mr. Speaker, let us also look at the question of success in the year 2011. Mr. Speaker, everyone knows that in St Vincent and the Grenadines we have the best nurses [knocking the desk] we have paid particular attention to the training of our nurses in St Vincent and the Grenadines which is now under the Ministry of Education but there is very close collaboration with the Ministry of Health.

Mr. Speaker, in October 2011, 20 nurses sat the Regional Registered Nurses Examination, 19 nurses sat the Midwifery Examinations for the region and 6 Nursing Assistance did re-sits at the regional examination also in October 2011. Mr. Speaker, the result is that all 45 persons 100%, a record in St Vincent and the Grenadines passed that exam [applause]. Mr. Speaker, it shows that our emphasis, that our focus on training our nurses having them available to take up local positions, having them available for service in the region and throughout the world is paying off. In fact, nursing is one of the careers in greatest demand and we are proud as a nation to be able to produce top quality nurses so that we can make available to our neighbours and have the use of them ourselves.

Mr. Speaker, let us look at another success story in the field of nursing. Five years ago we started hosting nursing students from the John Hopkins University in the USA

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** We have 44 students albeit they are late; they are coming in here and we do not want [inaudible] standing, so let us ... you are not losing any time. Thank you very much Honourable Minister, I think you can continue.

**HONOURABLE CECIL MCKIE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I was indicating that while we have some 60 nurses in Barbados, 50 in Trinidad and throughout the region and further afield, we also have nurses, doctors, administrative staff in the Ministry who are doing online programmes to advance and develop themselves.

Mr. Speaker, I had begun the outline of our association with the John Hopkins University in the USA, the fact that over the past five years we have had students pursuing their undergraduate and graduate programmes coming here to us here in St Vincent and the Grenadines. We did not host any students last year but we will have a student coming in March this year. In 2010 and 2011 we hosted two students from the Duke University of the USA; currently as we speak we are hosting two undergraduate students from the Lake Head University

Ontario Canada and most significantly, Mr. Speaker, we have a request before us that we are considering for us to host 40 students and potential students from the Duke University right here in St Vincent and the Grenadines. [Knocking the desk] Mr. Speaker, what this is saying is that we are recognised internationally for the services that we offer here in St Vincent and the Grenadines in the field of nursing and that persons are willing to commit and partner with us for the training of their own students.

Mr. Speaker, in Cuba we have 60 nurses some of them into their final year of studies in Matanzas School of Nursing in Cuba. Mr. Speaker, in September of last year we were able to have discussions with the Ministry of Health with the administrators of that institution with the students themselves. And we were able to identify certain possibilities for those students as well as students at home.

In fact, we communicated through our ambassadors and identified 15 areas of specialty that we can pursue for our nurses and I am happy to report, Mr. Speaker, that we have gotten positive feedback from through our ambassadors and we are presently discussing and shaping the possibilities of having our nurses receive specialised training in Cuba. [Applause] Mr. Speaker, what is required is for us to work with them as we did with the current programme for an intensive one year training programme to have these nurses receive the specialized training.

### **Programmes**

Mr. Speaker, let us look at the area of programmes. Under the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment we have 18 programmes that we have to administer: stores and pharmaceuticals, page 447, project 661 and 662. For 2012 we are going to be paying close attention as we did in 2011 to the question of stores. We are challenged with space and capacity and we are going to continue to address this challenge in 2012. What about pharmaceuticals and procurement? We continue to be one of the leading countries where procurement is concerned through the OECS Pharmaceutical Procurement Agency Services and we continue to be the top manager of our accounts with that institution.

Apart from this we also conduct purchases of our own, but, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to look at opportunities to obtain pharmaceuticals at a cheaper rate. I also mentioned, Mr. Speaker, that we have been able to fill over 90% of the requests for medications above the international standard. We will continue to ensure that we maintain that level. Mr. Speaker, we are aware also of the fact that there is wastage, challenges with general control where pharmaceuticals and medications are concerned and for 2012 we will ensure that we strengthen the management systems available so that we can reduce these realities.

Mr. Speaker in his address the Honourable Prime Minister also indicated that there is work to be done with the Lewis Punnett Home and as a Ministry we are cognizant of the fact that again the quality of lives of the persons at that institution can do with some upgrades and we will work during 2012 in this regard. Our community health services continue to play a very important role in our Ministry. At the various health centres of districts in the communities and Mr. Speaker, we will continue to enhance this programme as we go by.

### **Nutrition Units and Nutrition Support**

Nutrition units and nutrition support programme, programme 6741676, page 447. Mr. Speaker, during the year 2012, these units are going to play a critical role as we address the question of wellness for our people. We are

all aware that chronic non- communicable disease is now a household word not only for Vincentians but regionally and worldwide, recognising this we are going to strengthen the operation of this unit. We realize that we need to address this situation at all levels that the baby in the arm stage is a critical stage, we are going to pay attention to the babies in the arms; that our age group 0-3 will continue to receive attention through our ECHO programme and our other programmes; that our clinics and centres where primary healthcare delivery is concerned continue to receive much attention. We are going to achieve this objective through our community health aids in the fields at the homes of parents, at the primary and secondary institutions throughout St Vincent and the Grenadines; through the nutrition support unit and the school feeding programme where we continue to make meals available to our primary school students at a very nominal fee and also at the Tuck Shops at our secondary schools.

We are going to look at programmes at Ministries, business places, hospitals, geriatric homes and all institutions throughout St Vincent and the Grenadines. Mr. Speaker, we have identified a plan of action and a course that we will pursue during the course of the year to ensure that these objectives are achieved. In fact, we are going to strengthen the organisational framework and human resource of the unit. We are going to upgrade both senior and nutrition post to Chief Nutritionist and Senior Nutritionist positions and we are going to provide four additional professional staff, three community dieticians and one nutrition surveillance officer to be able to achieve this objective.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke about the ECHO programme and it is important that we have this programme continue the 0-3 year old age group is a very vulnerable one and we are going to ensure that the pilot project which takes from Sion Hill to Calliaqua is strengthened and that we continue to receive results in this regard.

### **Immunization**

Our immunization programme we would have achieved 100% over the past years. We are going to ensure that we continue to put the necessary legislation in place as we did in the year 2011 to ensure that we continue to maintain those levels.

### **HIV Aids and STI's**

Mr. Speaker, HIV Aids and STI's we had a very successful programme over the years where we were able to stabilize persons affected with these diseases and we now would look to reduce the incidents of these diseases by incorporating the provision of these services into the primary healthcare of St Vincent and the Grenadines. We are thankful also to the various organisations that assist us in this work Plan Parenthood Association as well as Caribbean Alliance and we are happy with our results in this regard. We received much funding over the years and we now have to depend on local funding.

### **Environment**

Mr. Speaker, let us look at matters of the environment. We have seen some success over the years and we are going to redouble our efforts where environmental matters are concerned. We have several protocols and Conventions that we are guided by: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, United Nations Convention to Combat Recertification, Montreal Protocol

on Substances that deplete the Ozone Layer, Cartagena Protocol on Bio Safety, Stockholm Rotterdam and Basel Conventions and Global Environmental Facility.

Mr. Speaker, it is under this facility GEF that we are able to construct a very important facility in Bequia the desalination project on that island. We have tested that facility and the quality of water is excellent. We have all of the necessary equipment in place. We have tested the photovoltaic cells that we have placed at the airport on Bequia. We are satisfied that we are producing more electricity than is required, in fact, we are feeding this electricity into the national grid through VINLEC this is green energy, renewal energy in practice [knocking on desk]. Early in this year, Mr. Speaker, we are going to enter into discussion with the residents in Bequia to let them know where we are. We are going to move into the next phase of laying the pipes and the storage and we are going to discuss with them the availability of water at this facility as well as, wells that would have been dug on the island led by Mr. Belmar and his team. No longer would the people of Bequia experience shortage of water.

### **Productions and Service**

Mr. Speaker, let us look at projects and service: big product, big projects the facility is in place already. Mr. Speaker, the area of public health I mentioned that we were recognised regionally for our outstanding work in Public Health but continuing on that unit and department, the Food Protection Unit, Meat Inspection Unit, water quality and health and safety issues the unit that deals with those matters, Environmental Engineering Unit and Community Health Integration Vector Control Unit all will be strengthened during the course of 2012.

Mr. Speaker, I must at this point and time congratulate Dr. Duncan, Mr. Doyle and their staff and their teams who collaborated with the Ministry of Education on a swift response to challenges that we had last week at the Kingstown Preparatory School and the Buccament School. [Knocking the desk] These units were able to move swiftly and eliminate the challenges that existed at those institutions. They have committed for 2012 to increase their surveillance at all public institutions and schools throughout the length and breadth of St Vincent and the Grenadines. They have decided that they are going to wage war against rodents and insects that are a pest to us as a society.

### **Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases**

Mr. Speaker, let us look at chronic non-communicable diseases. In September last year the Prime Minister and I journeyed to the United Nations for a Summit that focused for an entire day on the question of chronic non-communicable diseases. We are very much aware of our challenges and during the first quarter of this year we are going to announce a very aggressive programme to look at all aspects of wellness. We are challenged by diseases, lifestyle diseases, that are as a result of these lifestyle choices and a committee was established last year, and this is going to be expanded and their work is going to be enhanced and funds are available to us to carry out that programme.

Mr. Speaker, let us look at the question of PAHO. Over the year 2011 as I indicated we received the recognition for accomplishing 86% of our projects. In fact we have 26 projects that we would have undertaken with PAHO, and that is why we were recognised. [Knocking on desk] For 2012 we have \$150,000 available to us and we are going to ramp up our programme in conjunction with PAHO.

### **Central Water and Sewage Authority (CWSA)**

I mentioned that this is an outstanding institution in our country and that they have done outstanding work in 2011. Some of the projects the completion of the \$2 million Technical Office Complex at New Montrose, extension and update of the Buccament Water Supply System, completion of the upgrade of the Arnos Vale Sewage System, construction of a storage tank at Airy Hill, completion of the Akers, Calders Water Supply Improvement Project, they would have also implemented several projects over the last couple of years. In fact, a number of these projects they were able to complete using their own resources.

Mr. Speaker, just to make a clarification, the CWSA does not send bills to government departments; they depend on subventions that are given to them. So, it is not a case as was indicated or intimated that they are asking for an increase based on the fact that government is not paying their bill. In fact, they are having a press conference on Tuesday next week and I am sure that they will give a full outline of why this request is being made. But just to say that they continue to be exemplary in the way they carry out their operations they have several large projects to be implemented for 2012, they have looked at their income levels, they have looked at their debt servicing levels, they have looked at the projects they have to implement and they will give the explanation why they have to do other things.

Mr. Speaker, in Cuba September last year former Minister Slater now Senator Slater and team paid a very important visit to a bio-technical facility on that island, and [after] discussions Ministry to Ministry we were able to identify a product that is going to make a significant difference in St Vincent and the Grenadines. That product is called Heber Prot-P. Mr. Speaker what that product addresses is persons with diabetic foot ulcers and we have been able to get the commitment of the professionals through the Ministry of Health in Cuba that they are now ready to come to St Vincent to carry out the necessary analysis and to do all that is necessary for us to have that product available to us. [Knocking the desk]

Mr. Speaker, we have over 200 persons with this challenge and when we implement that programme we expect that it is going to impact significantly on the lives of Vincentians.

### **Medical College**

Mr. Speaker, Medical Colleges: during the year 2011 we were able to welcome a second medical college to the shores of St Vincent and the Grenadines. [Knocking the desk] We had the Trinity School of Medicine operating here for the past three years with their intake this week their student body should be up to 150 and with the student intake for the All Saints Medical School who came in September last year their student body would go up to around 60 students. We are waiting on the final word from the American School of Medicine on when they would establish a presence on our shores. It goes to show, Mr. Speaker, that our foreign policy has not impacted negatively on our country as a destination for these investments.

### **Medical Missions**

Mr. Speaker, Medical Missions, in 2011 we hosted 17 medical missions here in St Vincent and the Grenadines, including the Christian Hospital in Taiwan and we have a very special relationship with that hospital. In fact, we have several professionals that go there every year we have some there right now, and they also bring a mission to St Vincent every year and that they also offer us assistance with furniture and equipment. We are going to continue to treasure that relationship. We also had last year the Scoliosis Mission and as I mentioned and seven missions by the World Pediatric Project.

Mr. Speaker, in 2012 World Pediatric Projects will have eight missions to St Vincent and the Grenadines. In fact, as we speak they are at the Milton Cato Hospital right now doing medical interventions. Mr. Speaker, the team of general surgeons at the hospital right now includes Dr. David Lanning. Dr. David Lanning has been coming on these missions for the past five or so years; Dr. David Lanning is the doctor who led the team that last year separated the conjoined twins from the Dominican Republic [knocking the desk] he is here in St Vincent and the Grenadines as part of the World Pediatric Project.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot speak enough on these medical exchanges, we also had doctor Nanton and I spoke last year about fluoroscopy and colonoscopy and I was labeled a doctor after my delivery on that particular subject.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Okay.

**HONOURABLE CECIL MCKIE:** Mr. Speaker,

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honorary doctor.

**HONOURABLE CECIL MCKIE:** Mr. Speaker, these missions are invaluable, the world pediatric project has been going for eight years, previously the International Hospital for Children. Many Vincentians home and abroad would have contributed to this programme now they see where that programme is and where we are going. Each visit, children come from the other Caribbean countries, twenty came for the Scoliosis Mission and there are about nine of them here now. St Vincent has been confirmed as the hub for that project throughout the region. [Knocking the desk] and very shortly we will be looking at taking that project to the next stage which is the possible construction of a pediatric wing here in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Just to mention briefly some of the other areas that we would be involved with for 2012. The “Lives to Live Programme”, the “Home Help for the Elderly Programme” and the prosthesis project and these would be done in conjunction with the Ministry of National Mobilisation through their social development programme. Mr. Speaker, we have to be grateful for the implementation of these programmes. If you go throughout the length and breadth of St Vincent and the Grenadines you would realise that they are making a significant impact on the lives of Vincentians.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, I just want to remind you that you have fifteen minutes.

**HONOURABLE CECIL MCKIE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in fact my timing is perfect because I was virtually out of breath having outlined but a few [Laughter] I am also an athlete so I just have to breathe deeply and I am ready again.

Mr. Speaker, I touched on about a few projects that would be implemented during this year but I want to conclude by saying that when the times are rough we cannot say that we halt and allow the health of our nation to go backwards. I am happy and I am sure I speak on behalf of all Members on this side that we are happy to be on board the SS SVG ULP sailing through rough waters [knocking the desk] but holding our own [knocking on desk] excellent captain. And I further say that I will prefer to be on that vessel than to be in rough seas trying to swim like my good friends on the other side.

Mr. Speaker, even as I had to as a new Minister keep pace with the hectic times in the Ministry for 2011, I had to deal with one of the largest, both in terms of numbers and spread, constituency in the country; constituency of West St George wide and very diverse. We have come up with a strategy to deal with issues in the constituency. We have done two things:

1. we have established area councils six of them Belmont, Fairbaine, Villa, Indian Bay, Gomea, Dauphine, Belair, Fountain, Arnos Vale, Cane Hall and Dorsetshire Hill. Those areas council are all-encompassing they engage everyone in the communities.
2. We have also established what we call a West St George Manifesto that captures the thoughts of the people in the constituency in terms of what they would like to see done, projects, big and small things to be done.

In the year 2011 we were able to achieve significant success. Water we were able to install two standpipes at Pole Yard and we were able install a water tank at Airy Hill.

### **Environmental Work**

We were able to have teams dealing with cleaning in various areas and we also have an ongoing environmental team that deals with the cleaning of cemeteries, schools, the centres and other public areas in the community. Street lights, we were able to work with VINLEC to have some street lights install in the community. We also worked along with the Belair Clinic Diabetic group and they were involved in a very special Clothes Making, Sheets and Curtain Programme in 2011. We were able to open a firing range in Arnos Vale and that has added to the security aspect of our nation. A lot of persons are now going there and sharpening up on their skills and it is a very important mechanism for us to ensure that our people are disciplined and understand what a firearm is all about.

### **Culture**

Culturally, we continue to have the West St George Carnival, we produced the National Carnival Queen in 2011, Aviar Charles, we also had Scorpion who was crowned the Soca Monarch, best new song, third Calypso Competition finals of the Soca Monarch Competition from West St George.

We were also able to produce Ragga Soca; did I say Soca? [Interjection]Ragga Soca [laughter] we were able to produce, Mr. Speaker, the Jouvert King of St Vincent and the Grenadines the Minister of Health, Wellness and the Environment. [Applause]

### **Sports**

Mr. Speaker, in sports we have worked very closely with various sporting teams in the area and their organisations TBPO with their softball, cricket and netball competitions, well that was ASCO, TBPO Pure with their softball competition we were able to work with the various teams in the community, Young Tugs, East Bank, Spratt Eye and Young Saints.

### **Wellness**

We established a wellness group at Dorsetshire Hill.

### **River**

River we dealt with some work on the river that leads down to the Great Head Beach.

### **Schools**

We did significant work with all six schools in the community, five primary schools and the West St George Secondary School. We did major work to the Area Council and on the Belmont Primary School. We also did major work on the Dorsetshire Hill Primary School, both the school and the compound and we opened the brand new biggest most expensive best secondary school in the country, the West St George Secondary School. We also opened the Medical College in West St George [interjection] and we are able to work with the distribution of laptop computers to the children in the constituency. [Knocking on desk]

### **Adult Education**

We continue to have adult education classes in the constituency at the Doris McKie Learning Resource Centre and we also ensure that the environmental workers that they are part of that programme as well. We were able to place a number of young people on the “YES” programme for their one year attachment and we were able to work with the parents in the area to ensure that their children went back to school in September with uniforms and books.

We initiated a very important rail programme at Rockie Hill in Dorsetshire Hill and as well as in Clay-J and those would be completed this year and we had a number of self-help projects initiated throughout the constituency: Ashburton, Fountain, Villa, Arnos Vale, Cane Hall and we worked along with BRAGSA on repairs to several roads throughout the constituency. In fact, West St George has the largest network of roads in the country; it is always going to be very challenging to deal with these roads. We also engaged the Diaspora and we had a Town Hall meeting in the Diaspora and we received assistance from persons with our various programmes. And Mr. Speaker ... [interjection] okay that is for 2012; all right that is two extra minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke also about the water storage at Airy Hill, persons were looking for that for a long while and I should mention the Nichols Highway that would have been put in place, work on the Dorsetshire Road. Mr. Speaker many persons in the constituency were also placed in terms of jobs. Xmas 2011 was by far the most exciting in West St George, several successful projects; two parties for children, Upper Cane Hall and Bum Bum [interjection]; Christmas, okay Christmas okay, it is different from Xmas. All right Christmas, two parties for the children in the area, packages to over 200 needy and challenged persons in the area. We also had 200 jobs being distributed, being creative throughout the constituency and we had 3 very special light up programmes; one at Gomea Gap to Georgie Gutter, we also had one in Arnos Vale which was adjudged the best lit garden in St Vincent and the Grenadines and we also had a very special first time light up at Dorsetshire Hill

which was adjudged the best Christmas community for 2011 [knocking on desk]. Best Christmas community which involved lighting, Christmas activities in the morning and in the evening. [Interjections] okay, well [laughter]

**HONOURABLE SABOTO CAESAR:** But imagine the man, who came first, he did not say anything.

**HONOURABLE CECIL MCKIE:** Well, when I am finished, I will give him a printout in the Newspaper [laughter]. Mr. Speaker, what do we have in store for 2012? Ramp up all of these programmes; work very closely with schools, the four primary schools and especially the secondary schools; we are in fact going to have a West St George Primary School hardball cricket competition that will commence in February. We would also be working with the secondary school agricultural programme, with the playing field in that area; we are going to work with them with their music programme, with their cultural programme. We have some items to donate to them relative to their agriculture and sporting programme. We are also going to work with the other schools, Belair School, Dorsetshire Hill School, and Belmont School. Belmont School they would receive fencing through the BNTF Programme. The Doris McKie Learning Resource Centre persons in the community have committed to painting that building during the first half of the year, so we would work along with the relevant institution to get that done.

### **Human Resource Development**

We would continue to work with all of the areas in the constituency and also we will be doing some skills training and adult education work with them.

### **Tourism Sites**

A couple of very important tourism sites and the Minister is aware of this, the Dorsetshire Hill, Queens Drive route and that would become a very important tourist drive as well as the Belmont area, we are going to enhance that and we are going to look at the development of the SPA area with the ASCO Group.

### **Constituency Office**

We will be utilizing that for a number of activities and initiatives during 2012.

### **Sports**

Continue to work with ASCO, TB Pure, West St George Secondary, Primary School, West St George hardball competition as I mentioned, we are going to have the various teams also working closely with them and we are going to work very closely with the churches in the area as well, on several initiatives.

We have another river in the area to look at in terms of river defence. The prosthesis programme I mentioned earlier on. The whole question, Mr. Speaker, of land title we will look at the areas of Queens Drive and Bum Bum and also the area in Dorsetshire Hill that we will have to do some work with in terms of expanding that playing field. Discussions have been completed with the landowners and that will become a reality very shortly.

Roads and drains we have identified a number of them that needs to be done. We will continue our Christmas programme. We will continue to work with the young people especially to ensure that they receive placements where jobs [are] concerned. And in the field of agriculture the interior of West St George is very, very

important and it is a very important agriculture belt. I have already have discussions with Minister of Agriculture as well as, the Minister of Industry, and very shortly we would have a discussion with the farmers in the area to look at the whole question of production. Production as it relates to Lauders they have a very, very aggressive and important programme going on; production as it relates to export out of St Vincent and the Grenadines.

We also have the Hospitality Industry that requires a lot of agricultural produce and when the International Airport is opened we want to be in a position to have the necessary mechanisms in place to be able to capitalize on that.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I am indeed proud to be on the inside to be part of a process that is looking at the development of a brand new city in St Vincent and the Grenadines. We are seeing the development before our eyes, we are ensuring that the persons in the community are part of the discussion in terms of the development in their own area, and we are going to be working closely with the persons who would have been engaged to come up with a master plan for the development of that area. That area holds a lot of answers not only to the constituency but the entire St Vincent and the Grenadines. Many jobs would be created during the construction process and after the construction process many businesses would be established out there and therefore opportunities for many persons, and many projects will also be established to allow persons to come to that constituency and really enjoy West St George.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that this Bill will receive easy passage through the House and I am happy to give it my full support. Thank you very much. [Knocking on desk]

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Further debate, Honourable Member for South Windward. Give me a minute, you can sit. Let us allow those who are leaving to leave so that they can do so peaceably. All right Honourable Frederick Stephenson, even before you start, I want to recognise students from the CW Prescod Grade 4 School; and their teacher here Miss Burgin. We welcome them very young students indeed they are. [Applause] I think this is a good age for them to start the learning process and we wish them all the best. We hope that they will understand as much as they can what is taking place today, and of course I am sure we will assist them by the way we continue to operate. Thank you very much. Okay, Honourable Prime Minister, sorry.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** I think the Honourable Leader of the Opposition knows the tradition that when schools come from the particular constituency that the MP treats them to lunch. I just rise to remind my Honourable Friend about this. You know being a Frenches man and I am down there I am prepared in the spirit of everything to share it with you, but do not leave me alone as a Frenches man to bear it [laughter] you are the Representative, so I am prepared to share it with you. I think the kids should get some Kentucky [applause] at the end when they are going to lunch.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

**HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE:** Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased that the Prime Minister recognised clearly who is the Representative [laughter] so in the circumstances I will accept his proposal [knocking the desk]

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Which one?

**HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE:** The sharing proposal. Of course, I recognised that I am more fiscally challenged than he is [laughter] but I will share the proposal.

**HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICKS:** Mr. Speaker, permit me Mr. Speaker to rise as a constituent of the East Kingstown to agree to share also in the proposal [knocking the desk]

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** What? Central oh! [Interjection] [Laughter] this is wonderful, this is wonderful, Central too.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** We can allow him to participate but only if he participates to the same quantum as the children [laughs]

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** All right, thank you very much that is great; Honourable Member for South Windward.

**HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members. Mr. Speaker, one of the greatest acts of reconciliation is when you can forgive someone who has done you a wrong. As an Anglican just before we have communion we hear these words:

**“If you are offering your gift at the altar and there you remember that your brother has something against you leave your gift there before the altar go reconcile with your brother and then come and offer your gift”.**

Mr. Speaker, last night I listened to the Honourable Prime Minister in an act of reconciliation saying that he is asking his lawyers today to cancel the cases against the Leader of the Opposition, and the Member for West Kingstown and I think that this is a great act of reconciliation [applause] that really cannot go unnoticed.

Mr. Speaker, being the Member of this Cabinet with the largest portfolio after the Prime Minister, twelve programmes plus another twenty local organisations that the Ministry has to give support to you would understand that maybe I would need a little more time than all the other Ministers; maybe if you give me three hours I would be very grateful.

Mr. Speaker, I first of all want to wish all Members of this Honourable House a prosperous and productive 2012 and to pledge my continued support to the government and people of St Vincent and the Grenadines. And more importantly the constituents of South Windward placed their confidence in him and have afforded me the opportunity to serve them and to serve this blessed land of ours St Vincent and the Grenadines at its highest level. To them I will be forever grateful and I consider myself humble to be an obedient servant of the people for the people and by the people.

I want also to express my sincerest gratitude to the Permanent Secretary past and present, Permanent Secretary acting and to the entire staff in the Ministry of National Mobilisation Social Development, the Family, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, Sports and Culture for their unstinting support in 2011, and I looked forward to their continued support in 2012.

Mr. Speaker, like every other Member of this House before me who spoke on this side of the House commented, the world is in difficult economic and financial times, St Vincent and the Grenadines being a part of that global community; and as a small developing nation this global meltdown in the larger economies has undoubtedly left a devastating mark on our own economy and its development.

I listened to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition in his presentation understanding this difficulty, Mr. Speaker, and this dilemma that we are in today had this to say and I quote him:

**“These are difficult times and I know that the task of the Honourable Prime Minister at this time is a difficult one”.**

The Honourable Prime Minister in his introduction to his Budget Address at page 1 had this to say:

**“This Budget is being delivered at a time of continuing global economic crisis and uncertainty, regional economic slowdown or contraction, ongoing stresses and failures in several critical, regional and financial institutions, enormous challenges in the fiscal conditions of the Caribbean governments, the fallout of periodic natural disasters, and multiple economic and social difficulties on the domestic front”.**

That is why and how the Budget was crafted.

Mr. Speaker, His Excellency Dr. Zaire Tanning Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan addressing the United Nations General Assembly at a Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development during the period 24<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> June, 2009 had this to say:

**“The international community is facing the most severe financial and economic crisis of the past several decades, and it is those least responsible for it, the poorest among us particularly women and children who are hardest hit. The global financial crisis exacerbates other already severe problems of energy, environment and food that particularly affect the developing countries of the South. Already poor countries are becoming even more mired into poverty”.**

He went on to state:

**“We are at a critical juncture that requires rapid, decisive and coordinating action to diffuse this crisis, to address the causes of this crisis and to prevent similar crisis in the future we all have to work together to prevent the current tenure situation from becoming a social and human disaster with implication for the lives of millions of impoverish people, the implementation of the millennium development goals, political stability and peace”.**

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members I listened to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition in his presentation speaking that this government is likened to a ship with a captain who knows nothing about sailing. And so, he went all around and around like the nursery rhyme I remember, I do not know if the children remember it; “Going around the Mulberry Bush” without giving one creditable solution, Mr. Speaker, to the problems that he sees as necessary for the development of St Vincent and the Grenadines. I am saddened, Mr. Speaker, that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition has not offered one single solution.

Mr. Speaker, what His Excellency Dr. Tanning has said is exactly what the Honourable Minister of Finance and the persons in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning have done when they crafted these estimates for the Appropriation Bill for the provision of the services for St Vincent and the Grenadines for 2012. Mr. Speaker, this is an excellent and sufficient budget for these most challenging times, and I am happy to be a part of the programme, and I am fully supportive of it. [Knocking the desk]

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of National Mobilisation has been apportioned 3.8% of their budget estimate for 2012, \$29,246,803.00 of the Recurrent Expenditure and \$1,090,020.00 for the Capital Expenditure. These sums, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, are to be spread over the twelve programmes of the Ministry, namely general administration, Cooperative Division, Family Affairs, Community Development, Gender Affairs, Liberty Lodge , Home Help for the Elderly, Youth Affairs, Physical Education and Sports, Youth Empowerment Service and Department of Culture. Mr. Speaker, I am also reminded of that there are twenty other local organisations, which received funding through the Ministry of National Mobilisation.

Mr. Speaker, my Ministry's extensive portfolio is geared towards poverty reduction in St Vincent and the Grenadines and caters for the disadvantaged among us, disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in our society and they are as follows"

- The poor receiving public assistance.
- Single parent
- Mothers of poor household and their children.
- Women and children who are victims of domestic violence and abuse [inaudible].
- The elderly persons with disabilities
- Persons living with HIV and AIDS
- Vulnerable community groups and organisations.

Mr. Speaker, understanding these times we have to also understand some of the societal challenges that are affecting the Ministry and are affecting our country as a whole. Some of these include:

1. The continuous migration of male and female heads of households in search of employment overseas, and this has led to the loss of traditional community caregivers who are females and in some cases children are left to be cared for by grandmothers or grandparents who are aged and unable to work.
2. The changing lifestyles of our youth in two respects, first the unhealthy lifestyle that increases exposure of them to HIV AIDS and other STD's and STI's. Second, involved in getting big fast fat cash hence the involvement in illegal activities that lead to incarceration and institutionalization; the lack of fathering presence and support have led to increased hardship on households and increased demand on the state for support.
3. Increasing food and oil prices on the world market resulting in the cost of living and increasing the stress on the poor and the vulnerable.

Then in 2010 we had Hurricane Tomas and in the start of the year we had a recent freak storm and flooding in the north of the country. But despite these challenges however, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, the Ministry continues to forge ahead strengthening and building capacity of staff to better enable them. Firstly to

ensure that the vulnerable, poor and needy are provided for, to measure the impact of social protection programmes on poverty reduction, enhancing the lives of the poor and vulnerable and empowering them to live lives that are rewarding and fulfilling, equipping the staff with the necessary skills and equipment, tools for continued development, managing information and data more efficiently and effectively. These are some of what the Ministry has been doing in response to these challenging times Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members.

### **General Administration**

I now look at general administration. The administrative division in the Ministry provides both administrative and technical support to the other eleven divisions. In 2011 the administrative division implemented the following measures to strengthen capacity and enhance accountability of the staff and the Ministry by:

- a. Maintaining management information and data systems and accountability; an efficient information and data management system; in any organisation enhance its ability to make informed decisions and to meet its reporting obligation.
- b. 2011 this management information and data systems in the Ministry was greatly enhanced with staff training and development and the provision of the necessary hardware and software equipment. This will continue in this year.
- c. Ongoing enhancement of the administration of delivery of public assistance programmes and other programmes. An internal audit committee was established in June 2011 to address the queries raised by the audit department in relation to the Family Affairs Division and to determine the level of compliance.
- d. A social policy analysis framework operating manual was prepared in February 2011, and approved in March would be used by the Social Development Unit for monitoring and evaluation of all Ministries programme.

This analysis framework was used for the preparation of an evaluation report for the Cap 2011, the Uniform Disbursement Programme at the Family Affairs and the Teen Mothers Programme at the Gender Affairs Division. For each of these programmes, monitoring and evaluation instruments were designed and installed through various consultations as well as supplementary data bases were built.

In understanding this also the Ministry has put in place and continues to maintain a Disaster Management Plan. Mr. Speaker, my Ministry is responsible for the delivery of the majority of government's public assistance programmes in the event of a disaster that the Ministry is adversely impacted this will result in our disadvantaged client, mainly the poor and the needy be further disadvantaged.

In 2012, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry will continue to:

1. Revise and update its Disaster Management Plan.
2. Collaborate with NEMO to effect necessary staff training to enhance preparedness and readiness before, during and after disaster.
3. To put mitigation measures in place that would prevent a disaster or to lessen its impact.

## **Maintaining and Monitoring an Evaluation of Projects and Programmes**

Mr. Speaker, maintaining and monitoring an evaluation of programme development and delivery to ensure:

1. Efficient utilization of scarce resources
2. Maximizing use of limited funds, by targeting those persons who need public assistance are provided for and to minimize the number of cases of abuse of the system.

Mr. Speaker, there are too many persons in our country who abuse the social welfare system of this government. They would go to the Prime Minister's office and receive social welfare benefits, they would come to the Family Affairs Division and receive social welfare benefits, they would go to the Ministry of Health and receive social welfare benefits, and they would go to the NIS and receive social welfare benefits. Mr. Speaker, we have to put a cap on these in order that everyone gets a full share of the social services of St Vincent and the Grenadines. [Knocking the desk] Develop, execute, monitor and evaluate projects and programmes in a more cost effective manner to ensure the efficient utilization of scarce resources.

## **Community Development Division**

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to the Community Development Division. Community Development Division, Mr. Speaker, its role is to empower communities and community based organisations to contribute more meaningfully to the development of the people of this nation. I want to list now a number of programmes through which the Division will continue to empower communities in 2012:

- The community care development programme
- The Cap programme.
- The after school time programme.
- The community based entrepreneurship programme
- The promotion of IECT in rural communities
- Community education and training
- Community disaster preparedness management
- Environmental sustainability
- Public awareness and advocacy.
- Rehabilitation of social infrastructure
- Community mobilization and sensitization

Mr. Speaker, this Division is also responsible for community centres; community centres are hubs for community development activities within many communities throughout St Vincent and the Grenadines. They provide shelter to residents in times of disasters and they facilitate social activities and other developmental activities coordinated by government agencies, civil society and the private sector. In 2012 my government will continue to enhance these centres and ensure that they are available to residents in times of need.

## **Cap Programme**

Mr. Speaker, this is an excellent programme and we have to continue with this programme in 2012. 2011 was a very successful year; this programme was held in over twenty five centers or schools throughout the period July

11th-August 12th. Mr. Speaker this programme has impacted over 1200 students in the grades 2-5 from 57 primary schools and they were exposed to literacy, numeracy, life skill, social skills and craft.

### **Cultural Enhancement and Sports Development**

This year, Mr. Speaker, would be the tenth year of the Cap programme, there has never been a programme like this before you know, Mr. Speaker, this programme only came in when this Unity Labour Party Government came into office. This programme targets children identified as low academic achievers and their parents. The Cap programme is one of government's poverty reduction strategies and has a targeting strategy that is based on findings of the 1995/96 Country Poverty Assessment and other studies. It provides opportunities for poor families to utilize education and training as a means of escaping poverty, Mr. Speaker.

### **The After School Time Programme**

Mr. Speaker, research has shown that there are educational and development benefits to children and youths who participate in after school time programme. This programme provides opportunities for children and youth from poor families and communities to receive homework help, reinforce classroom learning and enhance social development. In 2012, the Division will implement six of these programmes utilizing community centers for this purpose. These programmes, Mr. Speaker, provide a space for children and youth after regular school hours, they are able to learn and develop and consequently reduce the opportunities for them to engage in risky behavior.

### **Family Affairs Division**

I now turn to the Family Affairs Division, Mr. Speaker. The Family Affairs Division delivers the bulk of social protection programmes for the government. The Ministry continues to deliver public assistance programmes in a manner that would enhance the quality of lives of the client. Mr. Speaker, in the Prime Minister's Budget Address page 30 last paragraph, I quote:

**“The 2012 budget makes certain that targeted social welfare payments and related poverty alleviation programmes continue at undiminished and substantial levels. Indeed their more efficacious delivery is undoubtedly ascertained. This unswerving commitment to the poor and for their upliftment out of poverty is a celebrated hallmark of my government. We sincerely believe that our Lord blesses those who considereth the poor”.**

Those words were taken from Psalm 41:1. I just want to add a little more:

**“Blessed is he that considereth the poor the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble, the Lord will preserve him and keep him alive and he shall be blessed upon earth and thou will not deliver him unto the will of his enemy”.**

Mr. Speaker, this Unity Labour Party Government delivers to the poor and that is why we are on this side of the Honourable House today [applause] The government continues to make every effort to strengthen existing laws to protect and support especially the poor and disadvantaged in our society. In this respect, Mr. Speaker, four pieces of draft OECS model Family Legislation, a Child Care and Adoption Bill and a Status of Children Bill

were passed in August 2010 and 2011 respectively. The Ministry has been informed that the OECS Secretariat is currently preparing the relevant regulation. My Ministry will continue its collaboration with the Attorney General's Chamber and the other relevant stakeholders with regards reforms to be effected in preparation for the administration. The other two pieces of legislations, Mr. Speaker, the Domestic Violence Bill and the Juvenile Bill will be introduced later on this year.

### **Home Help for the Elderly Programme**

Mr. Speaker, the records shows that for the period 2007-2010, 2011 the Ministry has positively touched the lives of 1782 elderly person in the Home Help Elderly Programme. Mr. Speaker, I want to remind this nation that when this programme was introduced many persons lamented the fact that the Unity Labour Party Government is putting people to clean old people's mess but today, Mr. Speaker, this programme is very well received in St Vincent and the Grenadines [applause] and a number of persons continue to come to the Ministry to ask for this kind of assistance.

Mr. Speaker, last year we were unable to train the number of persons that we wanted to but this year hopefully in the first quarter we are going to train several new home helpers for the elderly. There are 270 persons currently, Mr. Speaker, in the programme who are served by 89 homecare providers and two field supervisors. Mr. Speaker, during the period last year over 130 persons students, sorry were assisted with payments of external examination fees from the Family Affairs Division and 3,034 persons were assisted with school uniforms and other supplies for the school year 2011/2012.

Mr. Speaker, how am I doing with time, I do have 3hrs?

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** [Inaudible]

**HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON:** Mr. Speaker, [laughs] the Liberty Lodge Boys Training Centre; and Senator Charles in his presentation made reference to the Liberty Lodge Boys Training Centre. I want to give us a little background on that Centre. This Centre was established in 1969 and its main purpose was to provide a home and a caring environment in which boys 7-16 years of age who are from poor, disadvantaged families having familial, educational, emotional and behavioural difficulties so that they can acquire skills that enable them to become responsible, productive and better citizens when they leave there. It is the Centre's philosophy that lives can be changed for the better through strategic and timely intervention. It is envisaged that this can be achieved through the implementation of various programmes and projects and the maintenance of effective social work delivery service. Some of the programmes being implemented by the Liberty Lodge Boys Training Centre include:

- Social empowerment programmes
- Education and training for all students through literacy and numeracy
- Formal and informal skills training and civic education
- Parenting education for the parents of the resident boys through lectures seminars and workshops.
- Training for staff and for the staff development.
- Counseling, social work and outreach.

- Social protection through housing and accommodation, nutrition, medical care, recreation, security, social justice, through continued work with the National Child's Right Committee to be proactive in matters pertaining to child protection, safety and general development.
- Work continually with legal stakeholders, locally, regionally and internationally to ensure that all adequate legislative framework are available for children safety and development.

The programme also adhered to the United Nations Convention on the rights of the Child while focusing on the millennium development goals.

### **Infrastructure Development and Improvement**

The fact that 90% of the infrastructure on the compound of the Liberty Lodge Boys Training Centre predates 1969 Mr. Speaker, suggests that there is an urgent need to upgrade some of the building, the draining system and other small scale infrastructure. Additionally, the issue of security that is the fencing of the entire property is critical; as a result a four year development plan will be put in place from mid-January 2012 to do the following.

- To renovate and improve the administrative building.
- Rebuild the kitchen and the mess hall.
- Fencing the frontal area of the compound and erecting a gate and a security booth.

Senator Charles, we are getting some work done for the Liberty Lodge Boys.

- Renovate and improve the school building.
- Extend and improve the carpenter shop.

And I know that the Honourable Representative for Central Kingstown is interested in this also.

- Reconstruct and improve drainage system.
- Minor renovations to dormitory.

This programme is expected to cost close to a million dollars and much of this funding for this programme would be provided by the Republic of China and Taiwan. We continue to thank our friends through our foreign policy, Mr. Speaker, for the tremendous help that they continue to give to this nation. To date, Mr. Speaker, the Centre is home to 18 boys and it is anticipated that by the end of the first quarter of this year that the number will grow to about 25.

In terms of education: placement students are currently placed as follows:

### **BOYS**

- 7 Secondary Schools
- 5 Primary School
- 1 Receive support service

5 At the Liberty Lodge Boys Training Centre School  
18  
       residents total.

### **Cooperative Division**

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to the Cooperative Division. Mr. Speaker, during 2011 the cooperative sector continues to record growth in assess of 7%, membership 3% and savings over 6%. The Thrift component of the School's cooperative programme has recorded savings of over \$800,000 as at the 30<sup>th</sup> June last year, Mr. Speaker. As at December 31<sup>st</sup> there were nine credit unions, 12 non-financial cooperatives and 87 schools cooperatives, Mr. Speaker.

The Schools Cooperative Agribusiness component which was launched on the 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2010 has as its motto "Developing Youth Entrepreneurship the Cooperative Way". As at December 31<sup>st</sup> Mr. Speaker, I am happy to report that 9 schools were actively involved in poultry production and to date 4,616 lbs of chicken have been produced and sold at a value of over EC\$22,000.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, just hold, please for me. The children should be leaving at this time and if you could just hold a minute while they are leaving. Thank you. [Children departed from the gallery] [Applause]

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** All right I think you can continue, Honourable Member.

**HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON:** Mr. Speaker, the Appropriation of the earnings for each school reads as follows: reinvested capital 50% or just over \$11,000; returns to participating students 10% just over \$2,000; contribution to schools cooperative 17.5% close to \$4,000; contribution to school funds 7.5%; teacher/guide stipend %10%; indigent student grant 5%.

Mr. Speaker, the government commitment to modernise the financial sector regulatory framework with the passage of the Financial Services Authority Act (FSA) on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2011. This regulatory body will now have the responsibility to regulate and supervise non-bank financial institutions, such as credit unions, on the other hand, Mr. Speaker, the Cooperative Department in the Ministry of National Mobilisation will focus on cooperative development, promotion, training and school cooperatives. Mr. Speaker, I have here in my hand a document prepared here by the Cooperative Department, I have not yet taken it to the Cabinet for approval, I would do so very soon so that we can implement some of the new projects and plans to be implemented by the Cooperative Department in the Ministry of National Mobilisation.

Mr. Speaker, this year 2012 was designated "International Year of Cooperatives" by Resolution 64 of 136 on the 18<sup>th</sup> December, 2009 by the United Nations General Assembly. And here in St Vincent and the Grenadines, Mr. Speaker, I tabled a Resolution and it was passed in this said parliament on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2011 recognising and designating this year 2012 the International Year of Cooperatives. Mr. Speaker, also a committee was approved by Cabinet to plan and implement activities in celebration of the year, and we have a

year long list of activities. The staff of the Cooperative Department and the SVG Cooperative League is providing secretarial support for the committee and my government has further registered its support for the International Year of Cooperatives by:

- To increase public awareness about cooperatives and their contribution to the socioeconomic development and the achievement of internationally agreed development goals including the MDGs
- Promote the formation and growth of cooperatives for socioeconomic empowerment
- Provide an enabling environment with policies, laws and regulations conducive to the formation, growth and stability of independent cooperatives.

Mr. Speaker, I pause to recognise the acting Permanent Secretary and a senior staff in the Ministry of National Mobilisation who are here in this parliament this morning, and I want to continue to thank them for the tremendous support. [Applause] Mr. Speaker, my government is very supportive of all the activities planned for 2012, to this end the government will continue to facilitate the enactment of the proposed Cooperative Society's Act in support of the recently passed Financial Services Act and this piece of legislation is presently before the Attorney General's Chamber and we are hoping that we can get some work done on it.

The Cooperative Society Legislation will:

1. Make new provisions with respect to the registration, supervision, governance, operation and management of cooperatives.
2. Facilitate the expansion of the schools cooperative agribusiness programme in poultry and vegetable production in ten selected schools.

Mr. Speaker, if I may say, last year, and the Honourable Member for the Southern Grenadines is not here, the Union Island Secondary School produced over nearly 3,000 lbs of chicken from the schools' cooperative programme in that school [applause].

3. To facilitate the establishment of five non-financial cooperatives as a mechanism for poverty reduction, job creation and food security.
4. Enhance institutional capacity for the produce and fisheries cooperatives in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

And if I may say also that we are hoping to have Cocoa Farmer's Cooperative as well, Mr. Speaker, because we have to understand the times that we are in. We are encouraging our farmers, Representative for North Leeward; we have to encourage our farmers in the introduction of cocoa as another crop in terms of our agricultural diversification programme.

5. To facilitate the merger and reconstruction of rural credit unions to foster greater economies of scale.

Mr. Speaker, these are all government interventions initiated through the Cooperative Division, Ministry of National Mobilisation and aimed at achieving a reduction in poverty, creation of employment and an enabling environment that will support cooperative legislative reform, cooperative growth and development of financial stability.

Mr. Speaker, at the Media launch of the International Year of Cooperatives on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> January, at the Peace Memorial Hall Mr. Junior Bacchus President of the Credit Union League in his address spoke about Barbados putting a tax on their Credit Union Movement there, I want to make it abundantly clear in this Honourable House for all who are listening, Mr. Speaker, to state that this government has no intentions whatsoever, no discussions were held in placing any tax on the Credit Union Movement in St Vincent and the Grenadines. Mr. Speaker, to put a tax on the Credit Union Movement will be in total opposition to the government's commitment to the poor because most of us know that it is the poor people's money that make up these Credit Union; so we cannot on one hand say we are looking out for the poor, and on the other hand taxing them, this is not going to happen, Mr. Speaker.

### **Youth Affairs Division**

I now turn to the Youth Affairs Division. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, the Youth Affairs Division continues in its effort to engage the most fragile human resource sector of the state by providing for them opportunities for their participation, and involvement in nation building, on the job training, payment of a stipend and some job placements at the end of their training period. The efforts of the Division are supported by stakeholders in government service, private sector along with regional and international funding agencies.

Mr. Speaker, in 2011, there was an increase of a number of job seekers who have been affected by the continued fallout from businesses, which had led to downsizing due to the global economic situation. The Youth Empowerment Service Programme, Mr. Speaker, which started in 2001 that has received the support of the Republic of China and Taiwan, has continued to give support to the youth who are underachievers at school, Mr. Speaker. It is a means of providing a sort of on the job training so that these persons can gain sustainable employment. During the period January to December 2011 there was a total of 556 youths who were engaged in the programme, 453 females or 81% and 103 males just about 18%.

The year 2011 saw the initiation of a new programme targeting males, the MAP Empowering Programme, Mr. Speaker, and MAP refers to "Men as Partners". The Division of the MAP Empowerment Programme is to create a national movement in SVG to empower men to live healthy lives using a holistic methodology utilizing the techniques from "Endangered Health Men as Partners Programme" and the United Nations population fund, young men and HIV prevention. The Youth Affairs Division will in 2012 seek to:

- a. Mobilise and empower males and community leaders to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS.
- b. To encourage men to reduce their own risks by risk taking behaviours.
- c. To reduce domestic and sexual violence.

- d. To become actively involved in reducing the spread or impact of HIV/AIDS.
- e. To build positive relationships to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Since the commencement of this programme, Mr. Speaker, the project has completed:

1. A core committee of 30 members, including over 15 NGO's, CBO's, the government departments.
2. Five day training for facilitators - workshop for the MAP Empowerment Programme was completed.
3. Thirty persons including community leaders, Peace Corp volunteers participated in that workshop.
4. The MAP Empowerment Facilitator Training Manual for St Vincent and the Grenadines was completed.
5. Printing of the Facilitator's Training Manual Workshop was funding by UNFPA Barbados.
6. Continued community workshop to help participants gain a better understanding of building trust in relationships, reducing violence and the protection from HIV/AIDS and STD's were held in Barrouallie, Calliaqua and the Green Hill communities. Approximately 110 males from these communities participated in the workshop.

Mr. Speaker, these are programmes that are ongoing and will continue to help the young men in our society.

In 2011 the Division initiated a special vacation programme dubbed "Vincy Youths got Talent" from children ages 5-13, focusing on Arts and Craft; personal development and educational field trips as part of its strategy towards poverty reduction. Mr. Speaker, over 120 children benefitted from this one week programme. The programme was held in Rose Place, Bottom Town area, in Barrouallie, Evesham and Green Hill, and I want on behalf of the Ministry to thank the various cooperate citizens who provided funding for these programmes [knocking on desk]

Mr. Speaker, we have to understand that not just the government provides the financial support for programmes but we work in partnership with all of St Vincent and the Grenadines. Mr. Speaker in 2011, the Ministry joined twelve other member countries of the Commonwealth Caribbean in endorsing the Competency Standards for youth development work in the Caribbean, developed by the Caribbean for the Caribbean. These competency standards will receive official regional endorsement at the 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD) in February 2012. These standards will facilitate the development of the Undergraduate Degree Programme by the University of the West Indies and the University of Guyana for a pilot project offering in September 2012. Discussions are currently ongoing with St Vincent and the Grenadines Community College to offer a certificate level in Youth Development Work in 2012.

Mr. Speaker, we have to continue to empower our people and if we are concerned about the youth we have to take them seriously and they must understand that they too have a responsibility to themselves. The government can do but the young people must know that they have a responsibility also.

The Division in collaboration with the College and the Commonwealth Youth Programme conducted a module in project planning, monitoring and evaluation in November to December 2011; fifty five persons participated in that four-day training. The Youth Affairs Division continues to work with its regional partners in youth development work with a Consultation and a Caricom Draft Youth Development Action Plan for 2012-2017. The Caribbean Youth Development Action Plan provides a guide to minimum acceptable levels of National Policy and Programming, to achieve success outcomes for the well being empowerment and continuous engagement of young people between the ages 10-29 years.

Mr. Speaker added to this thrust is the exposure of our youth as Ambassadors for the country to the Commonwealth Youth Programme, and the Caricom Secretariat along with the UNFPA resulting in positive rewards for the country and community based organisations. Mr. Speaker, these are important interventions that have been going on through the Ministry and through the Division of Youth Affairs. All these efforts, Mr. Speaker, are aimed at youth mobilisation and social transformation in the fight against poverty alleviation, and the improvement of the quality of life of youths in St Vincent and the Grenadines while promoting their general development and ensuring their full participation in nation building.

Mr. Speaker I listened to the Honourable Member for West Kingstown yesterday when he spoke of a programme for youths in the Ottley Hall area. I want to say to him that I had in this year early consultations with the Youth Affairs Department and we have had workshops in Rose Place, but I listened that the Honourable Member looking for something in Ottley Hall. I want to give you the assurance that we can work together. Together now, it is reconciliation now, so we have to work together [knocking the desk] for the continued development of St Vincent and the Grenadines. I see he is not even smiling, Mr. Speaker, Eh, eh, eh, eh I, I, I, I stretched out an olive branch and he did not even reach out to touch it [laughs] Oh that is a good smile! [Laughter] now I get you, now I get you, you are in. You know if you know *Boopsie* said you have to smile with nine teeth, you know the Paul Keens joke, you have to smile with nine teeth, so if you did not show nine teeth you were not smiling.

During 2012, Mr. Speaker, the Division will work consistently towards achieving the following ... you see, Mr. Speaker, this government do not only promise, we deliver on our promises [knocking the desk] and we have been delivering on our promises, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we have been delivering and I know that over 50/60 persons were granted Title Deeds to their lands in Buddy Gutter area that is a promise and we delivered. We continue training of 500 persons on the Youth Empowerment Service Programme with emphasis on civic education, work ethics and financial planning, conduct capacity leadership training for 90 youths from community based organisations and 30 youths in development work, collaborate with the community college and the Commonwealth Youth Programme in offering a certificate course, continue to assist with the strengthening of the National Youth Commission, National Youth Council and the Boy's Scout Association. And as I said before, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of other agencies that the Ministry has to work along with. We have to continue to enhance and extend the "Youth on the Block Programme" outreach from 18-15 tapping in on resources from other state agencies.

### **Division of Physical Education and Sports**

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to the Division of Physical Education and Sports. How am I doing with time, Mr. Speaker?

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Fifty third minute.

**HONOURABLE FEDERICK STEPHENSON:** In three hours [laughs]. Mr. Speaker, the Division of Physical Education and Sports has a task of utilizing active living, recreation and sports as a proactive transformative and development tool to realise the building of its nation in the area where technology has replaced physical activity.

In September 2008, the following Heads of Caricom met in Port of Spain Trinidad we were awakened to the fact of the Wellness Revolution. The Division was mandated the “Lead Active Living Agenda”; that responsibility is still championing the cause at this particular time: Active Life Time Programme. In 2011 the Division held nine country walks in and around Kingstown, Choppins, Dauphine, Dorsetshire Hill and Stubbs mainly on the final Wednesday of each month. At an average fifty-two persons participated in each walk. This programme caters for the entire populace.

There are some programmes for senior citizens and two homes in Cane Grove and Black Point and also the residents of the Thompson Home. Inmates at the female correctional facility at Forte Charlotte benefitted from the programme weekly, public servants in Kingstown, some teachers and some primary schools. About 80 public servants do this monthly walk; community residents in Chester Cottage, Park Hill, South Rivers, Byrea, Sans Souci, Dauphine, Questelles, Glen, Stubbs, Richland Park and Union Island; 300 residents benefitted monthly from these sessions. Kingstown Methodist Church Women League on a weekly basis and 10-15 ladies benefitted and there are plans to commence new sessions in the communities of Barrouallie, Dorsetshire Hill and Cane Hall in early 2012.

### **School Sports**

Former and present national athletes along with other outstanding sport men and women are assigned to the Ministry of Sports on the YES programme where they are being trained in the Art and Science of coaching and then they work on the supervision of the offices in the Division and some of them assist with the Physical Education programme at the Primary and Secondary Schools on a daily basis. In addition, the Division goes to playing fields and hard courts on Thursdays in specific areas to conduct developmental programmes in at least six primary schools, secondary schools and the Grenadines also benefitted.

Students from all primary schools in Kingstown are being coached to play the sport of tennis five days a week. This programme was also extended to Brighton, Gomea and Belair Primary Schools. Further, Mr. Speaker, officers from the Division served on the National Schools’ Games Committee and they played very important roles to ensure that the primary and secondary schools netball and athletic champions from all schools and students in SVG ... Secondary schools’ cricket competition also took place in 2011. In addition Mr. Speaker, personnel in the Ministry of Sports worked with Team SVG for the entire 2011 Windward Island School games which were held in Antigua.

Mr. Speaker, for the first time in the history of St Vincent and the Grenadines due to the dedicated and hard work of the resident sport officer in the Southern Grenadines who was appointed in 2008, the Union Island Secondary School participated in a Carriacou Secondary School Games, Mr. Speaker. [Interjection] secondary, ah! [Interjection] I said Northern, sorry, Southern Grenadines, yes. I along with Mr. Hillocks the Director of the Division of Sports and I took along with me the Representative for the Southern Grenadines and we went to Carriacou and the Union Island Secondary School participated in that activity there. Mr. Speaker, I am hoping that for the next championship that I could take the Representative for the Northern Grenadines and to take the two secondary schools there to participate in those sporting activities as well.

It was a marvellous activity, the Union Island Secondary School did extremely well and Mr. Speaker, they were able to use that championship in Carriacou and they came on to the mainland with financial assistance from the Honourable Prime Minister and participated in the athletics championship here and they did extremely well. I want to say that I would be happy again to see the Union Island Secondary School up for the athletics championship this year. Mr. Speaker, Union Island is very dear to me, I spent many years living there and working along with the residents in Union Island and I think I could give the Honourable Representative for the Southern Grenadines a challenge if it becomes necessary [laughs].

Mr. Speaker, St Vincent and the Grenadines was represented and participated in the 4<sup>th</sup> ALBA games which were held in Venezuela for the first time in [laughs] 2011.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Fifteen minutes.

**HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON:** Yes Speaker, I will get there. We sent 16 athletes and 3 officials and this was very well received. Mr. Speaker, we want to thank the National Lotteries Authority [knocking the desk] for their support and their sponsorship of our athletes. Mr. Speaker, I want to say out of the ALBA Committee and the ALBA Games, Mr. Hillocks was nominated to serve on the Committee there and we are hoping to have the inaugural ALBA marathon to be held in St Vincent and the Grenadines for the first time on the 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2012 Mr. Speaker. We are also hoping to send some of our students to participate in the students' game; the Inaugural Students' Game of ALBA, in Bolivia from the 4<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> November this year.

Mr. Speaker, in 2011 personnel within the Ministry benefitted from ongoing training in various sporting disciplines with support from the government. Mr. Speaker, the Director of Sports attended a Sports Administrator's course in Australia while two coaches attended the West Indies Fast Bowlers Workshop in Barbados, Brazilian Federation Coaching Course in Brazil while groundsmen from the National Sports Council benefitted from the WICB Groundsmen Workshop held in Guyana. Mr. Speaker, we will continue to work with the development of our playing fields and hard courts throughout St Vincent and the Grenadines in the year 2012. In 2012 Mr. Speaker, it is envisaged that the National Sports Council will receive \$750,000 for the continued work in the areas of developing playing fields and hard court.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to ... I want to before I move from sports to continue to recognise the excellence of all persons in the area of sporting discipline in St Vincent and the Grenadines. And in this parliament again I want to compliment the likes of Juliana Nero [applause] the first Vincentian to score a century at the international

level in cricket, the first Vincentian, no male as ever scored a century I was told, so she is the first Vincentian male or female. You like that I know that. Mr. Speaker, in terms of the continued development I want to remind us that next year March that the Arnos Vale playing facility would be hosting three international one day, the West Indies against Australia [applause] and Mr. Speaker, in the Capital Budget for this year under the Ministry of Works \$600,000 will be spent to ensure that the Arnos Vale Sporting Facility is in good shape for these matches. You know that Australia loves St Vincent and the Grenadines, they love to play here and they are coming, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that through the National Sports Council we will continue to work in developing the Cumberland Playing Field and the Cumberland Playing Field which is the largest sports facility on the Leeward side and we are working on developing that. I know that the Representative for North Leeward is happy to hear that but despite his happiness to hear this, you know he is ensuring that we have a good facility in Cumberland but he wants a small playing field here and he wants a small playing field there and so on but we have to prioritize, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Division of Culture continues to provide

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Just a minute please. I just want to remind ... it is a reminder for the Member for North Leeward cannot respond in any way from the Strangers' Gallery. If he is there he has to observe the rules of being in the Strangers' Gallery [knocking the desk] Mr. Speaker, in athletics this year also we are also hoping to have two teams participating in the Penn Relays, two teams from the Thomas Saunders Secondary School participating in the Penn Relays. Mr. Speaker, I want also to say, Mr. Speaker, that they did excellently well last year, and we are hoping for even improved performance in this year.

Mr. Speaker, the Division of Culture provides service in five general areas:

- Documenting and sharing of information.
- Providing training in areas of the performing arts.
- Organising events.
- Providing advice and assistance in project planning.
- Providing for some of financial support for National Cultural Institution such as the National Cultural Foundation, the National Trust, Memorial Hall and Carnival Development Corporation.

During this year, Mr. Speaker, we received funding from ALBA for the participation of St Vincent and the Grenadines in the International Book Fair, which was held in Havana Cuba in February 2011, this year also 2012 there will be the Book Fair and I want to say that I intend to lead an official delegation to the International Book Fair in Cuba in 2012. Mr. Speaker, the Division of Culture will continue to visit St Vincent and the Grenadines ... well there will be a visit to St Vincent and the Grenadines of the ALBA Project Coordinator. St Vincent and the Grenadines will participate in the creation of a digital catalogue of historical documents and exchange of copies of historical documents with Latin American countries. Participation of St Vincent and the Grenadines in the catalogue of artist in Latin America and the Caribbean and the participation of St Vincent and the Grenadines in a programme of Latin America and Caribbean distribution of cultural goods and services.

Mr. Speaker, in 2012 the division will continue to seek for the development of the creative and cultural industries and we are hoping to work along with the Ministry of Tourism and Industry in this respect. Mr. Speaker, the Creative and Cultural Industry will play a very significant part in the continued development of this nation, we have a lot of artistes and we have a lot of good work and we need to help them to move on to the next level.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to enhance outreach aimed at building national pride and increase in productivity of citizens through the following:

- Showing casing of our national achievements and recognising exemplary citizens.
- Presenting activities that promote positive cooperative behaviour in our citizens
- The creation of one new cultural cooperative of business entity.

Mr. Speaker, we are hoping to produce 500 copies of the booklet Vincentian Voices Part 2, in 2012. The production of 500 copies of the booklet Vincy Mas, an activity book for children; presentation of the Garifuna Summer Camp to 50 children. Mr. Speaker, in terms of Carnival, Mr. Speaker, I cannot leave culture without speaking of our National Cultural Festival the largest National Cultural Festival.

Mr. Speaker, Vincy Mas 2012 will run from Friday 29<sup>th</sup> June to Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> July with the launch of carnival scheduled for the 5<sup>th</sup> of May. The CDC in conjunction with other stakeholders such as the SVG Tourism Authority with various overseas offices has already started to market their festival. In fact, marketing commenced immediately after carnival period at the regional and international level. Mr. Speaker, I have here with me some of the view cards for Vincy Mas 2011, this one here has the Soca Monarch Fireman Hooper, the Calypso Monarch, and the Ragga Soca Monarch, I did not see the Soca Monarch and I am a little disappointed with this one because GAO should be on this one, Road March, sorry.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** You are making that available.

**HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, there are several of them; maybe we can send them around the House to have a look at. Mr. Speaker, the CDC also has a site and there are over 11 million hits by persons who would have visited the site for information and or pictures before and after the various shows including those who followed the various shows by way of video streaming. In 2012 the site will continue to be used not only to provide information for the public but also as an income generation measure by the streaming of shows and the offering of advertising space.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to see improvements in Mas, Pan and Calypso and we have to continue to work along with our artistes to provide the necessary legislation so that they can receive the requisite revenue from the production and sale of their music. So, in 2012 the CDC will continue to work wit the relevant parties, the Attorney General's Chambers for the necessary legislation to curb pirated music. Mr. Speaker, in 2012, 2013 the CDC will work along with the Mas Bands Association to hold workshops for young artistes, the schools would be targeted. The CDC would continue to offer the public information regarding what is happening to

carnival this year; it is going to be bigger and better, Mr. Speaker. I want to compliment the members of the CDC for the tremendous work that they did in 2011.

### **Nine Mornings**

Mr. Speaker, the Nine Mornings Committee, the nine morning's activities which were just held in December last year continues to receive high praises and a number of persons in the Diaspora who came home for the Christmas Season and who participated in the nine mornings' activities gave those activities their thumbs up [knocking the desk]. Mr. Speaker, I want to say that in 65 communities and holding nine mornings' activities over nine days it is something phenomenal and so the government would continue to support the Nine Mornings Committee in all their activities. I want to congratulate all the winners and I want to congratulate Stubbs for being the best nine mornings' community, for 2011. Mr. Speaker, you should have been there to see in that community along with SEDI, the South East Development Incorporation we hanged "badmindness", "envy", "greed" and "jealousy" and so in that area out there in South Windward those things are gone for good. [Laughter]

We hanged them in the mock hanging and I would like for us to do that with something of the things that are happening in St Vincent and the Grenadines. Mr. Speaker...

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, I am very sympathetic to your cause but you would have to deal with the constituency matters now.

**HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON:** Yes, I certainly will do, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just before I deal with the constituency matters, I just want to say that the long overdue Crisis Centres, Mr. Speaker, would come to fruition very, very soon. We worked diligently and hard on it, Mr. Speaker. We worked very hard on it, Mr. Speaker and I know that there are many persons who were asking questions about it but, Mr. Speaker, if I may say, I still believe that the Crisis Centre is not the solution for the problems of domestic violence and abuse in our society; all of us we need to work wholeheartedly, families we have to get the family unit back together. It is important that people continue to live good lives; I mean we could build 200 Crisis Centres and crime will still be there. In Jamaica there are over seven or eight Crisis Centres, Refugee Centres and so on and Jamaica had over 2000, close to 2000 murders last year.

### **South Windward Constituency**

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to the constituency of South Windward of which I am very happy to represent, Mr. Speaker. They gave me a mandate, Mr. Speaker, and I continue to work with all communities throughout South Windward, Mr. Speaker, it is just one year but I want to say that there are many things that would have happened in the constituency over that period. Mr. Speaker, I know that if I say this that many persons would be vexed and I cannot even ask for some more, but I have been able to, Mr. Speaker, to secure over 100 streets lights in the area of Diamond. I see the former Representative for South Central here and I know that many persons who live in that Diamond area came from South Central and the NDP then established that informal human settlement at Diamond, but they did not put in roads, they did not put in any electricity there and so on but I am happy to report, Mr. Speaker, that in just one year we were able to secure over 100 street lights in Diamond area and that is something very commendable. [Knocking the desk]

Mr. Speaker, I was able to get some work done and repairs on the road in Bonhomme, repairs to the main roads in Calder, building of a new access road for the family of Monix and the Fernandes who live in the area of Adelphi Secondary School, repairing several pieces of road throughout the constituency in New Prospect, Simon, Peruvian Vale, Bottom Stubbs et cetera. Ensuring that the Rawacou tourism facility is lighted, I worked along with SEDI in bringing back sports to the community of Stubbs, football and netball, ensuring that cricket was returned to the Baibou playing field after many, many years, in the process of fulfilling a thirty year old promise of building a top hill road in the Baibou area. This project was on the books as I said for over thirty years today it is becoming a reality and work is continuing.

Mr. Speaker, the Basic Needs Trust Fund is spending over \$1.2 million on that project and I am very grateful for the work of the BNTF. Mr. Speaker, this road would not only ease the problems for the residents at Top Hill but I am looking ahead that lands in the Massey area and that road if it continues would come straight back over to Maroon Hill in Greggs and all those virgin lands in that area there could be used for the production of cocoa. Mr. Speaker you have to look holistically as you try to develop.

Mr. Speaker we continue to work with the CWSA in providing a \$20,000 water tank in Acres to meet the need of the residents in Acres down to the Seventh Day Adventist Church in Calder, we continue to put street lights in the area. We are trying to light the Stubbs playing field and other playing fields throughout the constituency. I am hoping that during the period we will also do some remedial work to the playing field at Baibou, put in a back wall there and put in a players' pavilion and so on.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to work with BRAGSA and the constituents to develop farm roads in Massey to ease the plights of the farmers. Refurbishing the old Peruvian Vale Community Centre for the use of concert and dance and so on and other educational programmes. I would hope that the Minister of Transport would look very seriously at the Vigie Highway that piece in my constituency is very bad, and I hope that he would look at that very seriously and do some repairs to the lower part of the South Union bypass. It is important if we have a landslide in the area of "Rally" Rose there, then you have to go all the way back to Lowmans, Greggs and so on and we have a bypass going up Reeves Level there and that needs to be fixed so that the work could be done.

Mr. Speaker, I want to continue to pledge my support to the constituents of South Windward and to say to them that last year was a very difficult year but I want to say to them that this year with their help and the help of Almighty God I would continue to serve them diligently and faithfully because I understand ... just before I finish that, Mr. Speaker, I want to also say that the South Windward constituency is the constituency that is home to the largest national project, the International Airport [knocking the desk] and so we have to put ourselves, and I am happy that there is a development plan for land use in the area and I am going to work along very hard with the constituents from Diamond up to Cedars in terms that we have to transform that area and transform the minds and the thinking of the people in that area. It is a lot of work, it is ongoing in the constituency, I want to especially thank the Cuban workers at the airport site for the tremendous work that they have been doing over the period.

Mr. Speaker, I drive down to the airport on a timely basis just to say hello to them and just to say thank them for the work they have been doing for St Vincent and the Grenadines [knocking the desk]. And I think that all of us

as Vincentians, the airport is important to our own national development and all of us should take the time out and just drive down there whenever we get the chance to and just thank them for the work that they do. They do it, I do not know how they do it, Mr. Speaker, I want to once again to wish all of us a very productive year and I want to wish this Appropriation Bill, Mr. Speaker, easy and safe access to this parliament. I thank you very much. [Applause]

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Senator Baptiste, just a minute. [Striking the desk with the gavel] Honourable Senator Baptiste.

**HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Before you start, I wonder if the photographer would like to make an adjustment they are right in the line of sight between Senator Baptiste and myself. I am talking to you the camera man here. All right thank you.

**HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE:** Mr. Speaker, I would be grateful if you tell me when I have 15 minutes left please.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Okay I will do so.

**HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE:** Thank you. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to make my contribution to this debate of the Budget for the year 2012. I am mindful that a national budget ought to outline the government's revenue creating measures as well as expenditure plans and programmes for the year in question, all with a view to provide protection for the people's fundamental and inalienable rights and freedoms in pursuit of their security and happiness. And before I go any further as I reflect on the statement of the Honourable Prime Minister last night, I would like to appeal to him that if he is sincere, and serious about what he has said about reconciliation that he takes his decision further to do all that he can, to see to the restoration of Mr. Elvis Daniel, Addison "Bash" Thomas and Mr. Johnson to their previous position. [Knocking on desk] For the sake of their children and their families who are suffering action, Mr. Speaker.

I listened attentively to both the Honourable Prime Minister's Budget Address and also the response from the Honourable Opposition Leader. As I listened and I considered and I reflected even on previous budget presentations of the Honourable Prime Minister I made the following conclusions:

- a. That the ULP administration does not have a real plan to boost the economy of St Vincent and the Grenadines.
- b. I do not see any real plan to cut by drastic measures the unemployment problem estimated by the IMF to be 25-30%.
- c. Neither do I see any true effective governance.

Because effective governance would boost productivity, create jobs and cause the country to make money to protect its people. And I will outline certain facts and indeed to quote the Honourable Prime Minister, I would separate truths from facts. When I look at the ULP economic policy and the place where we are today with respect to certain IMF measures that are seen in the 2012 Budget I want to make it absolutely clear, Mr. Speaker, that if you find us here on this side of the House referring to the IMF several times it is not because we have any sort of worship, reverence for this institution as one member suggested some time earlier. It is simply because we find it so interesting that at this time in 2012, the ULP has in sorts falling into their hands. You see when I reflect on passed budget presentation by the Honourable Prime Minister what I find is that it seems convenient them in those times to appear to hug up the IMF because often times he cited the IMF as authority for supporting his policies. He cited the IMF for example as supporting his countercyclical policy approach and on one occasion in 2004 he even declared his intention not to follow the caution of the IMF that:

**“This countercyclical policy stands**

and I quote.

**can only be pursued on a temporary basis and it is crucial that the private sector reemerge as the engine of growth in the economy”.**

The IMF had also said:

**“In light of the vulnerabilities facing the region such as the uncertain prospects for tourism and development in the global economy the mission encourages the government to adopt an appropriately cautious fiscal stance in the 2004 budget.**

However, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, what was the response of the Honourable Prime Minister to this advice of caution in 2004? He said:

**“However the government makes a somewhat different strategic judgement on the continued pursuance of countercyclical fiscal stance for the years 2004 and 2005. We will not be as cautious as the IMF Mission recommends but at the same time we would not be reckless or profligate”.**

These were the words of the Honourable Prime Minister. He refused to follow the caution but continually to make reference to the IMF supporting his approach, supporting his approach. Now, 2012 not once is the IMF mentioned in his budget speech, however the 2011 Article 4 Consultations of the IMF in one heading stated:

**“Public debt has risen and the scope for countercyclical fiscal policy is constrained”.**

As a result we are here today with IMF measures reflected in the Budget, measures that they say are as a result of the fact that over the years there was a situation with our structural and underlying vulnerabilities in St Vincent and the Grenadines economy and as a result now we have what the introduction of market base property taxes 15-25%. The IMF recommended a reduction in the wage bill, well the Budget of 2012 says that

we are not increasing salaries only increments and also the IMF measures for 2012 proposes reforms in the pensions with consideration of merging the NIS and the Public Service Pension Systems.

Now, I want to make something absolutely clear we often hear of economic crisis and how that and disasters affected us but listen to this carefully the IMF said in the consultation:

**“Unlike many developing countries which entered the crisis with strong public finances St Vincent and the Grenadines had been running deficits for several years”.**

And it went on to explain how the debt arose as a result of running these continuous deficits. So, when you want to talk about the effect, Mr. Speaker, of the economic crisis the problem was underlying before that and as a result we were not able to bear [knocking the desk] the economic crisis and the disasters in the way other countries were able to bear it, and able to survive despite these shocks or despite these things. It is important to put that in context. So, what are the truths from the facts? The truth from the facts is that if there is anybody who conveniently hug up the IMF over the years although now seemingly reluctant to own the reality of having to follow their measures it is the ULP government [knocking the desk]. The truth from the facts, Mr. Speaker, is that the government has no real plan to help the country recover, so instead

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, I just want you to be mindful of 33(9) and I leave it there.

**HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE:** Mr. Speaker, could you please elaborate.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** I find from my observation that you are reading a lot, not just quoting and I know when you are quoting and when you are reading. So, I just want you to be mindful of that okay.

**HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE:** Mr. Speaker, the truth from the facts ... thank you, Mr. Speaker. The truth from the facts is that the government has no real plan to have this country recover and as a result it finds itself depending on IMF plasters for the open economic sores that it created through its policy of high deficits and the attendant high debts that we ran over the years. The truth from the facts, Mr. Speaker, is that had the government had a different policy approach Vincentians would not have today necessarily be facing market value base property taxes in 2012 [knocking on desk]. The truth from the facts, Mr. Speaker, is that Vincentians today in 2012 would not have to be facing water bill going up [knocking the desk] had the government followed a better policy economic policy. The truth from the facts, Mr. Speaker, is that Vincentians have to come to grips with the reality that their government in 2012 has to be considering either raising the contribution rate to the NIS or increasing, raising the retirement age or both or having to merge the NIS pensions and the public service pensions. These are the truths from the facts. The truths from the facts is that reluctance to consider some of these measures in 2012 has a lot also to do with the fact that the Honourable Minister of Finance fears the political disadvantages to his image that could be resulting if he were to put certain measures in place.

So, when I look at certain programmes in the Ministry that has been asked by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition to shadow, I am worried because while they are good programmes and programmes that I support and that we here support. I am worried that the relevant revenue needed to carry out these programmes may not

come and when you look at the history of the implementation rate and the facts concerning whether or not programmes were implemented it is testimony to a genuine concern as to whether or not these programmes would be implemented in 2012. And this is what we are concerned about when we are talking budget debate, what will happen for the people truly. Not just listing out plans and projects and intentions but what can truly realistically happen because of how you have been managing the economy.

So, when I look at the Home Help for the Elderly Programme for example I observed and the Minister confessed that no training was done last year. It was not a lot of money estimated to be spent to train an additional 30 Home Help Care Providers, yet it was not done, why? Because the money was not there to do it, so that when you tell me that in 2012 you plan to train not more than 15, I observed first of all that you have reduced the number you planned to train and that in itself said something. Secondly, you are not as specific, you said not more than 15 that could mean one, it could mean two and it could mean three. So, when you look at these things, Mr. Speaker, we have to be concerned.

Now, the fact is when you have a economic policy, when you are running deficit for many years and the debt keeps going up, the people who really need the intervention the most vulnerable among us they tend to be sacrificed in this whole process. Because one of the things we have to observe is that the Ministry of Social Development is not a Ministry that contributes a lot or if any to revenue, it mostly needs, you mostly have to pump revenue into it, so these are the areas that will tend to suffer as a result and I wish to point that out.

I want to speak about the Crisis Center the Minister referred to it though lastly in his presentation and I am concerned that at this stage he is now telling us, he said, "The long overdue Crisis Center will come to fruition very soon". That is not what was said in 2010 and 2011, there were specific times placed for when it would come into fruition. Why now do we not have a specific time period? Is there some conscious recognition that it really cannot be done in 2012 so let me not set up myself and say it will be done because I really cannot guarantee it will be? I am asking the question.

I would like to see it done because in as much as the Honourable Minister made the point that in other countries there are many Crisis Centers and Shelters but they still have a lot of crime, I beg Vincentians to consider, and the Honourable Minister knows this too that a Crisis Center in existence for victims of domestic violence and their children, to provide protection to them, to give counseling and to rehabilitate them, it can be the difference between a woman just getting beat up and a woman saving her life. Because if she has somewhere to flee to for temporary security and measures that can be used to rehabilitate her to help her know that she does not have to stay in the situation, to strengthen her character wise she can avoid become a statistic of death.

So do not give me that kind of excuse that it is really not the solution to crime, you did not say it was the solution to crime, you did not make that an issue when you put the programme in the Estimates and said you would bring it. The issue is it can save some people's lives even if it is just one woman life, it can save her, because [knocking the desk] often times the victims tell you they do not have anywhere to go, and so let us really be serious we have to buck up.

Let me give you some statistics, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, concerning why such a Centre is so important especially in 2012. I attended the first ever regional colloquium of women leaders as agents of change in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in the month of June on a personal invitation by the Honourable Kamla Persad- Bissessar, the Prime Minister of that country. At that meeting there was a report presented by Miss Yasmin Odlum of the Inter American Division on women, and it was also reported in the Search Light Newspaper subsequently. Four things came out of that report which concerns us in this country. The report revealed:

1. That from 2000-2010, ten years, St Vincent and the Grenadines had recorded the highest female homicide rate in the OECS, 45 women were killed over a ten year period, say four women per year.
2. In that same statistics it proved that St Vincent and the Grenadines had recorded the highest number of women deaths motivated by domestic disputes in the OECS: that is 17 of the 45 women, 17 of the women who were killed over that 10 year period their deaths were as a result of domestic disputes and that was the highest figure in the OECS.
3. The statistics showed that over the same 10 year period SVG recorded the highest number of rape report in the OECS 589 rapes according to the stats were reported for St Vincent and the Grenadines. All the other OECS countries had lower reporting figures and lastly of the 589 rapes that were recorded over the 10 year period or say 58 or 59 women raped per year of that amount only 255 charges or convictions were recorded and SVG was said to have the lowest conviction rate in the OECS.

In others words it was bad enough we doing the worst according to reports, it is worst still that we had the least number of convictions. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, in light of these facts, I see a Crisis Centre as key and urgent for the needs of victims of domestic violence especially women and children and victims of sexual violence also. We cannot afford such delays on an institution that has the capacity to recue, secure and rehabilitate victims, we cannot. However, the truths from the facts as I said before is that when you are running an economy like the kind that the ULP has ran over the several years these kinds of programmes tend to get sacrificed that is the reality. But you know something, Mr. Speaker, another truth from the facts is that the same Crisis Centre, which the Honourable Minister said last year in a parliamentary answer: he was still awaiting answer form the Ministry of Finance and the Service Commissions about staffing the Centre since the reason it had not yet been operationalised. This same Crisis Centre could easily be staffed if we would only cut the big contract paying jobs which ULP former politicians and activists hold today it could create the staffing for a the Crisis Centre; [knocking on desk] truth from facts, Mr. Speaker.

I know that efforts have hyped in recent times, on face book for example and otherwise to deal with this whole vexing problem of what seems to be an increase in crime and violence and I wish to applaud Vincentians in Canada, Miss Nyla John and Bequia poet Mr. Dillon Ollivierre for their efforts in forming the face book group page called "Time to Stand Against Violence and Crime in SVG" the last time I checked, Mr. Speaker, there were over 2300 members to this group and I know that they have certain plans with respect to bringing awareness to the problem of violence in St Vincentian and the Grenadines and addressing it.

I also wish to commend my colleagues Honourable Senator Frederick who herself and members of Frederick Attorney have announced that they would be offering for now in the first instance, at least one day a month to begin with to assist persons who have concerns about domestic violence issues. These are practical efforts [applause] and we have to acknowledge them, but while we do these things, Mr. Speaker, we worry about 78 year old Mr. Joslyn affectionately known as Servant of the Lord who to date has been missing. And despite all that has been said about this other matter we still are somewhat obliged to await the final word of the police with respect to the disappearance of young Shanika Small. We are very sorry about these things. It shows that we really have a lot of work yet to do with this problem of crime and violence. In reality we feel that enough is not being done but I hasten to join with the Opposition Leader in reminding this Honourable House that the New Democratic Party Opposition had meditated on the matter and proposed a few years back in this parliament a spiritual, social and redemption charter. This charter was also featured in our 2010 Manifesto and it outlined among other things ways practical ways in which we the new Democratic Party hope and still hope to help address this problem of crime and violence.

Some of those ways, Mr. Speaker, included pursuing a policy of household sustainability that each Vincentian household must have at least one occupant employed over the next five to ten years that is what we had said we would do because we understand the economic situation of some people. Not justified but truth is some people use that and they go and they do crime but we said that we would address it. We also spoke about strengthening youth development programmes to assist in dealing with the value of the people which we believe is at the root of the crime problem, so we said we would provide greater funding and financial assistance for groups like Girl Guides, Boys Scout, Pathfinders, 4H Clubs, Brigades and all these other groups to support them.

One of the other things we said we would do, Mr. Speaker, was to provide a Girls Home for disadvantaged homeless orphaned girls and at this juncture I would like to recognise the announcement made by the Honourable Member for Central Leeward that Major Antoine of the Salvation Army and his team would be actually doing something about this in terms of setting up a home to this effect. [Interjection] so, so, I shouldn't commend him? Okay.

We also said ... one is enough it seems Mr. Speaker. We also said that we would develop value laden family life telecast for television, and I want to say something about this, you see this is being done in a lot of countries and I find it difficult to understand why for example the Family Affairs Division cannot get into this. TV is a very powerful tool when it comes to sending values, signals and messages. We have our children, you go to Barbados you see on the television advertisements and programmes for little children teaching them things like what is a good touch and what is a bad touch, do not let people touch you here and do not let them do this; giving them skills so that they can fight off and ward off sexual predators and so on.

You have in Jamaica for example "Talk it out don't fight it out" programmes in the primary school teaching the children tolerance and how to deal with conflicts and so on. These are things we can do very practical and they work. We can also use the TV programme which is what we propose here to give education on certain family laws, like the Family Court Act which the new Democratic Party passed in 1992 when we set up the first ever Family Court in the OECS [knocking the desk] and like the Domestic Violence Act and the Trafficking in Human Bill or Act which we passed here in September. We need to teach our people what is in the law for

them, how it protects them and what they can do. Some people would not come to you but if they see it on TV and they hear it they would know what to do and they may then take a step. We can do these things; you see I am offering solutions too.

I noticed that the Honourable Prime Minister in his address he outlined some measures to deal with crime and while he was doing it I found myself smiling and saying to my colleague but we have that too, we have that too. Because in fact, in our manifesto these are some of the things we had and the Honourable Prime Minister I also noted that there was a specific one you had, which was basically exactly what we had in our manifesto, even though I did not see it in yours. And it was to include Belair as one of the places where we would put a police station [knocking the desk], we actually have that in our manifesto: “Identify communities for construction of new police stations example Belair” We talked about providing coastguards with the requisite manpower and technical resources to ensure safety of our territorial waters and I see you said you are going to do that. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, the New Democratic Party Opposition, we have ideas too of things we would have done and we recognise the need to do things in these areas.

We talked about introducing tougher sentences for sexual offenders; we talked about establishing visible police presence in communities especially those with high crime rates. But it is also important for me to note, Mr. Speaker, that we did not just talk about these things we also declared our declaration of a no tolerance policy for corruption and we said as a result we would implement integrity legislation. Because you see, Mr. Speaker, we the Leaders have to lead by example because even the criminals and potential criminals are looking at the things we justify, the things we excuse and the things we pass or we let pass because people are in high positions. And often the lack of moral authority at the head or leadership can be one of the strongest influences for evil and it would defeat the efforts that are being made otherwise. The Bible itself said, “That if the head is sick the whole heart is faint”. So, integrity legislation would address the problem of corruption at the point of leaders in government and public servants and so on so that we can make sure we are sending the right signals in fighting crime to the rest of the populace, Mr. Speaker

Mr. Speaker, I think I have 15 minutes left [laughs] I have been watching my

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** You have more.

**HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE:** Okay, thank you, I have been watching my watch closely, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to say something brief about the Public Assistance Programme and I also want to take this opportunity to say I support all the programmes of the Ministry of Social Development, all because they are good programmes. I have it here in my speech [knocking the desk] to say that I recognised that there are several programmes that the Ministry is partnering with UN agencies and other agencies internationally to do, any other government would have done the same thing. Ah mean we signed UN Conventions [laughs] the fact is I am saying to people out there when the Honourable Member is having their “Men as Partners Programme” and “Children against Poverty” you go and you benefit because they are for you. You go to the workshops, you attend them and you listen and you learn because you have to take advantage of what is provided. And I thank continually the UN agencies and others which provide the kind of support for us in these parts to do these things, but concerning the Public Assistance Programme, I simply want to say two things,

every time we hear about it we still do not hear a plan with some kind of target to reduce the number of persons dependent on this. And I am not speaking about the elderly and those who cannot work, so please I am not talking about that because we have to have a target, we have to have a plan because we must recognise that through job creation some of these persons would not have to be depending upon the state for public assistance and also I want to say that it is time for us to set up a truly transparent and open criteria for people to get on the list [knocking the desk] because it is felt by too many that often times the Public Assistance Board is seen as a political tool.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** I wonder if my Honourable Friend would give way. Mr. Speaker, the Public Assistance Programme is governed by a law, there is a Board and able bodied persons are not entitled to public assistance and therefore any reduction in joblessness would not take people off the public assistance because those persons are not on the public assistance list. The persons who are on the public assistance list are the elderly poor. And the numbers of persons who are old, Mr. Speaker, are increasing because we are living longer. Secondly those who are ill and poor, you may have somebody and this may surprise some persons, you may have somebody who outwardly looks as though they are fit, 50 years old, but they have a doctor certificate say they are suffering from hypertension and diabetes and at a level which is difficult for them to work.

Some of them you may see they look health they have HIV and Aids and then of course a significant number are children of poor persons whom we assist because you have to help them with matters with school. You take for instance somebody who goes to the Community College; we have persons who are in the Community College, who are going to the Community College who get public assistance. So I just want to..., there is a myth about how this thing is done. I just want to say this, Mr. Speaker, that of course the world is not perfect [interjection] yes, yes, yes, Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt that the odd person may slip through, but overwhelmingly this list is one which is consisting of poor people and indigent persons. I just want to explain that and I would not be party to public assistance monies be taken to..., and given to strong persons who should be looking for jobs, never, never.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** You may continue, you have not lost any time.

**HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I understand all that the Honourable Prime Minister explained you know, the point remains that if more people are working, those who can work, these same people would be in a better position to take care of their elderly grandmother and so it may not be necessary for the elder grand parent to have to depend on the state for public assistance that is the point I am making and it is valid, because the fact remains that we have a problem here where jobs are not being created at the rate it should be and that is what needs to be addressed, that is not something to overlook.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, striking of the gavel.

**HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to reflect before I conclude, finally, on my experience living and now working politically for the constituency of West St. George [applause]. I want to give warm thanks to the elected members of the various constituency groups which make up the West St. George Constituency Division for the New Democratic Party; I want to give them warm thanks for selecting me to be their caretaker and future candidate for West St. George [applause].

During the year 2011 even before official election as a resident of West St. George and otherwise I [was] able to partner with Vincentians home and abroad to be able to see to the needs of some people in West St. George and elsewhere and I would like to make note of at least two agencies outside of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, one is called “The United help for children of SVG,” (UHCSGV) and it is headed by Mrs. La Fleur Huggins Mohamed, a Vincentian and her daughter, her 11 year old daughter Kya Mohamed who wanted to be able to assist children back home in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and partnered with me to provide school bags and school supplies and we were able to do this and I am thankful to them.

Also recently in the month of December, we partnership with GEMS New York I was able to support a few persons in West St. George who are elderly and needy with some foods and personal items packages as well as some children getting some more book bags and school supplies for January and I want to thank GEMS New York and Mr. Fessie York of Standard Shippers in New York who charitably shipped the items to St. Vincent and the Grenadines [applause].

I pledge to continue to work hard for the people of West St. George [applause] I know that there are issues they are facing which have not yet been addressed. I listened for example to see if the Honourable Member for West St. George would have spoken about the top Ash Burton Road which is in such a terrible state and the people of Ash Burton would tell you that they feel they are being politically victimized because it is well known that they are big time supporters of the NDP [applause]. Then there is the Guinea Hill Road that has to take Dorsetshire Hill Primary School children to school, way up above Bum Bum if the have to walk the route come down, they have to walk all the way come down to Arnos Vale and then take a van to Sion Hill and walk go up to Dorsetshire Hill. So this road is important for them, but the way the road is for the last I do not know how many years, it is dangerous, one resident fell down twice and had two miscarriages, Mr. Speaker. These are the testimonies of the people. Something must be done, something must be done.

Mr. Speaker, as I conclude I am very sorry to have to inform Vincentians that this budget 2012 is once again unsustainable, unrealistic in areas and it does not give much hope for improvement of the quality of the lives of the people in the year 2012 in St. Vincent and the Grenadines [applause]. But I wish to give them hope that the Members on this side of this Honourable House will continue to be there for them to listen to them to comfort them and to do what we can even in opposition to help to relieve at least a bit of their burdens [applause] and I want to also give hope that despite the economic hardships you still have your freedoms, you still have your choice and I want to advice you using the words of the declaration of independence of the United States of America, the American colonies at the time said and I quote,

**“We hold these truths to be self evident that all men are created equal and that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights that among these are life, liberty and pursuit of happiness that to secure these rights Government are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed that whenever any form of Government becomes destructive to these ends it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it and to institute new Government [applause] laying its foundation on principles and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall see most likely to effect their safety and happiness”.**

For finally Mr. Speaker, my dear Vincentian people and Mr. Speaker, and this Honourable House, in the words of the third President of the United States, Mr. Thomas Jefferson and I quote,

**“To preserve the independence of the people we must not let our rulers load us with perpetual debt, we must make our election between the economy and liberty or profusion and servitude”.**

My dear people, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I want the people of this country to understand they still have their freedoms and choice to choose in a next election between economy and liberty and profusion or lavish display or supply but bandage servitude. It is only a matter of time, Mr. Speaker, and in 2012 may God have mercy on St. Vincent and the Grenadines. I am obliged [applause].

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** I will take Senator Browne and then after I will take you Senator.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, it is now quarter to one almost.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Okay.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** And perhaps it is a convenient time for us to take the luncheon suspension.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** I think so.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** We can come back at 3:00 p. m. Mr. Speaker?

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Very well.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Accordingly I beg to move that this Honourable House do stand suspended for the luncheon period until 3:00 p.m.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**House suspended at 12:45 p. m. (Luncheon)**

**House resumed at 3:05 p. m.**

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** When we took the luncheon period I recognised the Honourable David Browne, Deputy Speaker, Senator. Give me few minutes, few seconds and you will start. Okay, Honourable David Browne you can begin and you have 45 minutes in which to make your presentation. Begin now, you begin at 3:06 p.m.

**HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, God has spared us all yet to see another year. As I make my presentation on this 2012 budget, I commence by saying thanks to God for having us all here today. Criticisms, Mr. Speaker, in times of tough economic conditions are essential to the maintenance of any Democratic Government; therefore, Mr. Speaker, they are always welcome. But when the Opposition Leader has described the Prime Minister’s presentation to this budget as several hours of excuses for failure I think, Mr. Speaker, he has gone overboard and when he talked about corruption under the Unity Labour Party Mr. Speaker, I think that he is drifted far out of sea.

You see, Mr. Speaker, I strongly do not believe that the New Democratic Party has any moral criteria when coming to corruption. Yes you are in opposition and you have to defend and you have to speak on several issues, but there is past, Mr. Speaker, there is a past, Mr. Speaker, there is a past right in South Leeward where there was a proposed community centre, Mr. Speaker. You see modern day engineers, I do not believe we have any in Government right now, we have Morris Slater he is an excellent personnel in that field, there is Brent Bailey and in the private sector there are several other architects, but no one, Mr. Speaker, could construct the community centre at Questelles as good as the Opposition when they were in Government.

In accounting, Mr. Speaker, basic accounting, it is understood to every debit there is a correspondent credit. Same here we walk into the Ministry of Transport and Works and in their books lies cement, galvanise, windows, steel, toilet to construct a community centre in Questelles and you go on site, Mr. Speaker, where it supposed to be and it is not there. As if Mr. Speaker, it was built by cobweb, total transparent, not just one, there is numerous. Southern Grenadines, Mr. Speaker, there is another project there, Coastguard Project, you cannot find it, it is built transparently, what engineering skills possessed there, Mr. Speaker.

You see when we talk about corruption in opposition, we talk comfortably what we will like to put in place, all the rules, all the projects, and low and behold your history show you have not able to hold ground. I have bought, Mr. Speaker, a potato peeler about seven years ago for TT\$25.00 I saw the documents for Ottley Hall there was one several thousand dollars described the same, but when we talk corruption, I understand what happened at the Ministry of Health, you have a bit of protocol breach, KFC tyres but a community centre, Mr. Speaker, an entire community centre just disappeared in air. You hear all sorts of stories. You hear materials were stored in the downstairs of a church, Mr. Speaker, but that is the reality of 17 years in Government. We have not, Mr. Speaker, come any way close to that and we must understand that sometimes things do happen and we could bring it modern day.

You are in opposition you are making certain suggestions on corruption on certain acts and so forth, but there are Members on that side of the House, Mr. Speaker, who received \$1,500 a month to run a constituency office and it is not opened yet to date, but you want to set an example to get into Government. You have to correct these things. We can all talk, Mr. Speaker.

Another matter that was arise, Mr. Speaker, is pertaining to the divestment of shares in the NCB and I honestly believe that some of us are not fair and honest to the public, because I look back, Mr. Speaker, at the Hansard from January 10<sup>th</sup> 2002 and I saw a question that was posed in this Honourable House by the then Honourable Major St. Clair Leacock as an Opposition Senator and I would not go through the details but the synopsis shows that he was asking the Government, why are you taking so long to something with the NCB internationally and regionally other banks have merged, indigenous banks in the region have worked together to achieve the requisite capital and other ratios that will make them more comfortable. Why is the Government not working towards something similar to that, Mr. Speaker?

But you hear him today speaks differently. Well we know what the world say about that. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways [applause].

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Minister for Central Kingstown.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** On two counts, Mr. Speaker. On misrepresentation and imputing improper motives to me. He referred, Mr. Speaker, the fact that there was a question tabled in this House and continued in his ranting that a double-counted person, be careful. Now, Mr. Speaker,

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Now I did not get the last word that you said.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** He implied that I was double standard.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Double-minded.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Right, okay and he was talking as he is accustomed to, Mr. Speaker, about things he does not know. When I raised in this Honourable House the question of the capital adequacy ratio of the National Commercial Bank, the either of the bank being sold at the time was not the issue of the day and for those of us who have some understanding of financial background, notion of capital adequacy speaks for itself. When the bank had to subsequently be sold because of the debt in which state entity found themselves in and the Government took a decision to reduce the rate of interest by getting a better quality loan at the CDB, put all together, it is a horse of a different question. For him to try to make the links therefore that the Governments policy was being pursued in terms of capital adequacy is no longer the case, it is no longer the case at all, Mr. Speaker, and he must stop speaking about things he does not know, Mr. Speaker.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Okay thank you. Honourable Member just a minute.

**HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE:** Mr. Speaker, I have the Hansard here you know Mr. Speaker.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Okay.

I mean I do not want to waste much of my time. I could pass it to the Honourable...

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** No, but you see the Honourable Member is saying that you are misrepresenting actually what took place then and now. It is not a question of wasting to prove the point, okay, so unless you are not going to prove the point then you just move on.

**HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE:** Mr. Speaker, January 2002 ten years, two days a few hours, you asked a question in this Honourable House, the question and you said, I mean, you say, "in the view of the merges being forged between major international, regional and other commercial banks in the OECS, can the Government advise of the progress if any or plans to merge the NCB," and you went on, you went on, you say, look you see.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** All right, Honourable Members let me hear the Member.

**HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE:** But Mr. Speaker, why are we..., I mean we cannot deny this now. There are other persons on the other side who spoke about divestment shares to in the NCB, long before I dream to come into this Honourable House [applause].

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** All right, let us move on. Let us move on Honourable Member.

**HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE:** Mr. Speaker, under Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Transformation. There is no single factor, Mr. Speaker, that will bring about prosperity to the agricultural development of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The problems are there, the Prime Minister spoke about them, feeder roads, markets, availability of suitable labour, praedial larceny, transportation, poor farm management. It takes a mixture of wide range of ideas, products services and money, Mr. Speaker, motivations on all fronts, the Ministry employees must possess the momentum that we have seen in them before. We should cut the un-necessaries, Mr. Speaker, and we should redirect ourselves towards more fruitful purpose that is the task that is before us in 2012 and that is the way we should work.

So Mr. Speaker, when \$4.3 million is placed in the banana service unit and \$3.1 million is given for Black Sigatoka out of the \$4.3 million I pray, Mr. Speaker, and I hope that there will be no problems arising from the application of this fund, honestly. Over \$1.2 million, Mr. Speaker, for farm support for the purchasing of small machinery and equipment, for crops, livestock and production coming from or working through the Venezuelan Government, Mr. Speaker. Another \$200,000 for the upgrading of the Animal Plant Laboratory at Campden Park and Mr. Speaker, this is definitely needed as agriculture seeks to expand, as we get into new areas of marketing, as we seek to introduce new products and different types of produce into the country, we have to improve lab, we have to improve on the way we do things, long gone the days when things are done by trial and error, Mr. Speaker.

To support the private cocoa project, Mr. Speaker, \$150,000 has been allocated. It is a private project and the Government has support that project overwhelmingly. Earlier or a few weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, there was this talk about who supports the projects and do not support the projects and who spoke during the election campaign and there were even some sneers and jeers pertaining to whether or not I support intercropping or not. Mr. Speaker, I said in my budget address last time around 2011 that we must be cautious about intercropping. I did not say that we should not intercrop. People caution you on a lot of things, they caution you about getting married, they caution you about bathing on a particular beach, even getting involved in politics, Mr. Speaker, but they do not tell you not to do it. Since when being cautioned mean you must not do something? I encouraged the representative for North Leeward, the shadow Minister for Agriculture to borrow one of those kids laptop and Google problems with intercropping cocoa and you will see a list of them there, Mr. Speaker. That would should you clearly what I was saying. I am not saying that we should not do it, I am saying that there are problems existing and we must look at them and see how best we can go forward.

Mr. Speaker, in the 70s early 80s even in the 60s the Prime Minister spoke about a particular plant that we used for shade, rainfall tree Madura that was an excellent feed for livestock back then and a wonderful tree to fence for shading your animals. Presently now scientists would tell you it is not an excellent plant for feed, it gives your animal too much worms and you should not put it on your land it observed too much nutrients. But that is the reality. I was just asking or mentioning in the Honourable House that look we have to be very cautious how we do things. I was not saying that we should not intercrop and he was joined, comically joined by the representative for West Kingstown and Senator Frederick and I laugh. I say I could have never made such a statement. I search my words upside down and could not find that. But Mr. Speaker, that is the nature of presentation NDP style.

Mr. Speaker, I am seeing the Minister who is responsible for agriculture has in his budget \$3.9 million for implementations of small projects and the Questelles Primary School is one such beneficiary, Mr. Speaker. There are some works to be carried out down there, moving of a toilet, providing extra facilities for the students. From my knowledge the BNTF has already approved the project. Drawings were done and I think it should go out for tender before the end of this month.

In education, Mr. Speaker, there is \$1 million for the upgrading of the Technical Vocational Institute of which Campden Park will tremendously benefit from that. I understand the situation that exists at the institute in Campden Park, I am there ever so often speaking to the Principal and the various teachers and I know that the school has tremendous problems and I thank the Government for putting in this budget the necessary funds to correct that [applause].

Further in education, Mr. Speaker, the result indicators will show that there is clear plan to strengthen the career guidance in school, mostly needed establishing a national parent teachers' association and reintroducing student councils. Mr. Speaker, we spent a whopping \$1.5 billion over the past 10 years in education and a plan to spend another billion over the next 10 years, watch a Government, Mr. Speaker [applause]. Mr. Speaker, the enhancement of the public library, the same library that they say will never build, completed now, Mr. Speaker. There is \$350,000 being allocated for the purchase of books and a vehicle. I do not think none of us in this Honourable House would have wanted to remember what a public library would have looked like under the New Democratic Party. Every time I remember the library I remember the good senator..., we often at times sit at the same table, place hot, facilities are totally uncomfortable for learning, but look at a building that is provided today under the Unity Labour Party, Mr. Speaker [applause].

Book Loan Scheme, Mr. Speaker \$1 million. In South Leeward over 250 students benefited from this Book Loan Scheme and it is something that the Unity Labour Party is continuing. The establishment, Mr. Speaker, in nine communities of early childhood centres across the country. Mr. Speaker, the Unity Labour Party understands what education in this country is all about. I mean we do not do the necessary, padlocking the Treasury and balancing the books you know, Mr. Speaker, because there are times when you have to overlook that. There are times you have to go beyond balancing the books. It is easy to pay \$20,000 for a student to go overseas and in my constituency I might need the \$20,000 to help renovate a clinic, but one child gets that, one child Mr. Speaker, gets that. So that shows clearly our aim, our vision our policy. You have to have a narrative; you have to have a flagship, when things are hard we still provided the necessary under the education development, Mr. Speaker [applause]. Times are hard; we are not getting a barrel of oil at \$20.00 or \$9.00 Mr. Speaker, but we are able to do tremendously well

In transportation, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Transportation has seen \$1.6 million budgeted for the Vermont Francois Bridge. I have heard plenty talks about the bridge. Well we all know it is coming now clearly under this Government. It is not unlikely and untimely, it is timely and it is likely. Mr. Speaker, there is a few hiccups soon to be ironed out, but the funds have already been allocated, contractor has been hired and a few things just need to get organised and the persons from the valley will be comfortable knowing that there is an alternative route to get where they are going and in the case of disaster they will be better reached, Mr. Speaker.

A bit on roads in South Leeward; well the Prime Minister allocated \$5 million for roads last year in the latter part of last year and South Leeward benefit tremendously from that, overwhelmingly Mr. Speaker. A last piece of road that work was being done is that piece of road from Ju-C up to WE FM, created controversy, plenty problems, Mr. Speaker, if you ask me, unnecessary problems. I approached the Ministry asking them when the Prime Minister allocated the funds what roads in South Leeward they were going to do and they explained to me what they were going to do in South Leeward. I did not take anything for granted, I did not mix any concrete to fill no hole, I understand that the Government has an obligation and we must work with them and that piece of road beautifully done now, Mr. Speaker, over \$125,000 up to \$130,000 was spent on putting in drainage and organizing and paving the road properly, Mr. Speaker [applause]. No noise simply done by the Ministry.

The Custom building, well I noticed no one complained about that, but I mean there are folks who are complaining about what is allocated for the Prime Minister's Residence, what a time, Customs building \$1.5 million. We know the conditions under which the officers work now, Mr. Speaker and is one of the greater revenue earners for the Government. How can we not allow them to work in comfortable environment? How can we just allow them to feel so uncomfortable and raise the necessary revenue for this country? It is something similar to the Prime Minister's Residence. The Prime Minister put in 14 to 16 hours a day work in this country, has revolutionized the education sector of this country, he is the hallmark and the pillar behind the international airport, Mr. Speaker, but some persons wish with all the international relationships that we are developing, when folks come to see us from overseas and he organised a cocktail or meeting, Members on this side and even that side of the House must visit up there and sit down with an umbrella or watch a bucket in the centre of a floor catching rain. I do not understand it, because as St. Vincent seeks to develop itself and hold its own internationally I would not want to see the Prime Minister's Residence on face book or twitter throwing buckets and people with umbrella. Some folks believe it is the home of the Prime Minister and this is private home. It is the home for the Prime Minister now and the one to come in the next five, ten years whensoever's and the following one to come.

It is all good Mr. Speaker that the..., if the Prime Minister's down the road would all be the Unity Labour Party Prime Ministers, but Mr. Speaker, it is amazing. There is also the story about a vehicle for the Prime Minister and I look at the newspaper, the newspaper, say another vehicle and I listened to other persons in this House and they say, another vehicle. I am saddened to realise recently in this House that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition had to push his vehicle. I am embarrassed by that, but in this modern time where we have created all the necessary linkages, I would not want us to fall short and feel embarrassed. We have several embassies here, how can I feel to know that the Prime Minister come out of his residence and pushing it, we have several embassies here, people are looking at us, people are expecting certain things from us, neither can I ask my Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker, to stop at Lodge Village and catch a taxi come down to the Financial Complex. I cannot do that. You must realise that folks are persons [interjection] Mr. Speaker, I am making the necessary contribution to the development of this country and we must treat them accordingly [applause].

You see no one make noise about the \$1.5 million for Customs, but what is earmarked for the Prime Minister's building somebody feel uncomfortable. There are Members on the other side who say give them the money that they could spend it in their constituency. You ask them if they are running the constituency office that they

collecting \$1,500 for every month, they ain't start to do that yet. You cannot take care of little, but you want much [applause] Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I see the Honourable Minister for Transport and Works has \$1 million for the redevelopment of Kingstown Bus Terminal and I listened to him, Mr. Speaker and he said that there will be some funds coming from private sector as well to support this particular venture and we are glad for that [interjection] exactly, but I will tell you this, you do not easily attract private sector support so you know. The Opposition appears as if we treat the private sector totally evil. We owe them money; we do not listen to them when they talk to have the private sector prompting maybe a \$1million or \$2 million into a project like this they must see something on this side of the House that is positive to do so [applause].

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Health \$150,000 is allocated for work at Campden Park and Sandy Bay nurse and doctor quarters. Now in Campden Park I am comfortable that this money will be spent. I have not heard that point raised on the other side that this is needed, maybe it is an oversight, but I am glad that the Government see that and I am glad that I am around to point out certain things that are necessary in the constituency of South Leeward.

Mr. Speaker, we must remember when oil, as we would say barrels of oils would be next to nuttin, Mr. Speaker, but we could not get an oxygen plant and we were using oxygen at the hospital for ages. The Minister of Health I thank you for putting \$2 million in the budget for the development of this plant. It will go a long way [applause] and I heard someone raised a point yesterday about medical attention. This Government spends millions of dollars, millions from vision now to going off to Trinidad, Barbados and Cuba, to individual citizens of this land, millions of dollars. I have sat in the budget presentation and hear the Ministry talked about what they do, Mr. Speaker. Of course there is the one off cases here and there. I know of Unity Labour Party supporters who are waiting on assistance, I know, so then when you bring an isolated case and you say because the man supports us on that side and he is NDP and he refuses to help him, trying to throw smoke in we eye and throw sand the rice, nonsense Mr. Speaker [applause] total nonsense.

**Ministry of Housing**, Mr. Speaker, I always praise Morris Slater and his team down at Housing for the work that they are doing [applause]. Hurricane Tomas they have operated as if Mr. Speaker..., well the Opposition said it, they said that we were prophetic, materials, land, house repair we know it was coming and we fix it up. Under Housing prior to the Unity Labour Party there was hardly anything to think about. Four houses, oh, oh, oh, not really houses, cattle pen you say? Mr. Speaker, 300 houses in Clare Valley, we have over almost 4000 applications now, over 4000 applications now pending for just almost 300 houses for Clare Valley.

Mr. Speaker, you see I have realised the network here with Housing..., I saw a \$1 million debt subsidise by the Government for Housing at NCB and you hear all quarrel..., all the folks at those various spots whether it is Edinboro, Peters Hope, Clare Valley, Brighton, Diamond knowing that they have able to receive a cheap house under the Unity Labour Party [applause] Mr. Speaker. Green Hill as well, those folks feel comfortable, the Government would have subsidised these homes, the New Democratic Party afraid housing like how jumbie afraid holy water, they run from it [applause]. The Prime Minister hand it to the Honourable Minister here for transport. If you ask the staff down there right now they say sometimes four, five months past before they get

their salary under the New Democratic Party [interjection] oh my goodness, do not call that name in here [laughter].

Mr. Speaker, I am not going back down that road period. I already had my little 2 cents on corruption I ain't going back down that road period [laughter] no. You see where housing is concerned a go-getter spirited personnel took it on. It was totally in deficit, to bring it to where it is today, Mr. Speaker, that we have provided several hundred homes for people in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and I know the Opposition cannot say only for the Unity Labour Party, because even in this Mr. Speaker, we opened our arms and we spread, colour does not exist. Everybody got house [applause].

You see, we could talk, I does listen you know and I listen attentively when certain things are mentioned in the House. It appears, you tell the entire globe that it is all a labour world, nothing else happens on the other side. You have public assistance, I watch the YES Programme, there are folks who are bawling on the YES Programme, Mr. Speaker, they claim that..., they say, look only ULP children are getting onto the programme and I personally for South Leeward, I say nonsense. Earlier this year I had visited the office umpteenth of times, earlier this year I went there and I asked them to give me a listing for the persons who applied for South Leeward, 48 persons applied, there was no indication whether the person supported ULP or whether they supported the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, I called all the persons and I asked them if I can speak with all of them and I invited everyone to my office on a particular day and I met with everybody individually who showed up and then I met with everybody collectively and I said, look, only 20 persons are getting onto this programme today or whenever the Ministry choose and twenty something persons will not go on, but I would not like to know that there are twenty something young persons in my constituency..., and I say that because I am the caretaker under the Unity Labour Party [applause] who are just walking around wondering what happens next. So I will like to keep a relationship with you all once you are not on the programme, let me know so let me see what I can get sorted out for you. I did not ask colour. I say leaving this meeting today you going to hear that David Browne asked colour. The only question I asked, Mr. Speaker, out of the 48 persons, there were only three males and that hurt. And I asked the young ladies who were there I say, do not tell me when you make your money the guys stay home and you just give him and it is something that is expanding not only in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, because when you check across the region it is the same thing. The Prime Minister spoke about it. The Minister for that particular department spoke about it and you are realizing and I am realizing the greatest collections of males I am seeing in any one setting is in this House of Parliament.

So there is a problem there, Mr. Speaker, and few days ago I went down to the Ministry of Youth and I had a talk there with the personnel in-charge and they spoke to me and they show me what the plans are to take this forward. They understand there is a problem, guys are staying back they are not getting involved, they are relaxing the females are taking the forefront and they showed me a manual, Mr. Speaker, that I believe would be tender to Cabinet at some point and time and they have already start working from it doing a little thing here and there. The Minister will brief you later down on that I guess in the appointed time after it has cleared Cabinet, but it is showing that we realise the problem as the Prime Minister and the Minister said and we are working on it.

Now I am not a Minister, Mr. Speaker, I am merely a Senator and the Deputy Speaker. I lost my chance for that, got beaten by the representative Nigel Stephenson on the other side, but I hold my own. I get involved in every Ministry here and there and do what is necessary that I can for the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. So that is why I could talk so broadly on a lot of things. I could open my mouth and I could speak on various [applause] issues.

**Tourism**, Mr. Speaker, \$4.9 million, which the Vermont Nature Trail will benefit. Now check the Estimates under the NDP, the Estimates under the NDP Mr. Speaker, the tourism sites were stuck away in the Ministry of Agriculture as if too what I saw then the idea was we are not sure what we are going to do with these, let us just leave them there until the Unity Labour Party from Government, that is what I saw. If you check the years, I looked back in the 1980s I checked the Estimates for years, because I have the time to do so, I ain't getting pay for nothing. But there they were in the Ministry of Agriculture doing what? The only conclusion I could draw is that they were waiting for the relevant Ministers Rene Baptiste, Glen Beache, Saboto Caesar to take them to where they are today, over fourteen point something dollars spent, Mr. Speaker [applause].

Mr. Speaker, I know I only have 45 minutes and I am not going to ask for any extra time. I like to talk less these days, Mr. Speaker and act more [interjection] thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In South Leeward, Mr. Speaker, there are five pillars that I have embraced since I have become a politician, social cohesion, spiritual development, social justice, agriculture and fisheries, and capacity building.

Social cohesion, Mr. Speaker, the sponsorship of the South Leeward Netball Championship and I got a call this morning from someone who is part of the sports executive in the area and they have asked for the continuing of that sponsorship and we will do that, I will do that. Mr. Speaker, this is not a case where I am going to the Minister and asking for money you know. This is David Browne, Senator Browne in his own little capacity raising funds to do the necessary in the constituency [applause]. Full sponsorship of Value Netters Netball Team thousands of dollars, they went into the national championship, they went into Campden Park championship and Barrouallie, they have placed first in Barrouallie, they have placed second in Campden Park and they are going again soon into the Campden Park championship. Full sports gears for individuals in various areas soccer, athletics and cricket, young people come to me all the time. Sometimes they are going off to represent this country from my constituency, the necessary cricket gears, soccer gears I provide them, Mr. Speaker.

The NGOs in the constituency, also I put them within that whole aspect of social cohesion. You have Eagles Clare Valley, Sparks Campden Park, BDO in the Valley, Hope in the Valley and Raspo in Rillan, all have worked well. I have been communicating and whatsoever I could do for them to help them to keep that spirit alive and getting community work completed, Mr. Speaker, I am part of that. Watch a caretaker [applause].

Star Lime, Star Lime, Mr. Speaker, a production of the Unity Labour Party South Leeward Youth Arm geared towards creating, Mr. Speaker, good relationship among young people and even adults. Now, Mr. Speaker, that is a nice little thing that the young people have and I see some of them here today, you see South Leeward is the second largest constituency, Mr. Speaker and we must realise that there is a large amount of young people. I embrace them with love, genuine love from the depths of my heart and they are full of ideas and if you are not

careful you know, Mr. Speaker, they can outwit you, they are bright and you have to find ways to work with them and embrace them and get things done in the constituency.

Capacity building Mr. Speaker, read to lead from 7:00 to 12:00 children are being taught in the constituency how to read that is my Youth Arm initiative again. Work on libraries, Mr. Speaker, well this is an issue, because I spoke about libraries in South Leeward last year in my budget presentation and the only library that would be constructed in South Leeward is one in Campden Park. All the other areas that we are putting library, some library exist and we are going to do some renovations and there are buildings provided. But the only area and the hardest area to put up a library, you take materials on site today before you know it somebody done thief it. So the Youth Arm and Sparks the NGO in the area they set up few nights wondering who taking these materials, strong supporters of the NDP, moving the blocks, the cements ridiculous, Mr. Speaker. I have spent thousands of dollars out of my pocket thus far for that project and I cannot get it completed yet and I have spoken to persons and asked them to assist me, just talk to the individuals it is not easy, the funds are not easy to come by these days and I really would like to see the young people in the neighbourhood in the whole area there come out and be part of this library project. I said it last year when it is completed I encourage the Honourable Representative to be part because there is going to be programmes there that he can go and teach young people to read, he was a teacher and he can get involved. I was really hoping that I could have completed that library in a year, but problems, Mr. Speaker.

South Leeward also benefitted, Mr. Speaker, from a book loan scheme provided by my Youth Arm again, over 100 students benefitted. You pay nothing you just come and sign and collect books, Mr. Speaker [interjection] no, nothing went on TV, Facebook not really. Mr. Speaker, South Leeward Outstanding Youth Awards 2011 another project of my Youth Arm. You see a lot of persons could talk you know. People operate as if when you are not in Government you cannot do anything, but look at all these projects that are being done comfortably within the constituency. South Leeward Most Outstanding Youth Awards 2011; 16 areas Mr. Speaker, youth in entrepreneurship, youth in sports, education, skills award, music, spiritual development, fisheries, media, culture, community service award, community youth organisation award, youth in special circumstances, youth in agriculture, youth in dance and drama, youth in art, youth in IT, Mr. Speaker, 16 areas that we are looking forward to award young people who have done extremely well in the constituency. And if down the road, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry wants to take this on and make it a constituency thing throughout the country I embrace that, it is a wonderful idea, it is a good venture to have the young people feel rewarded for what they would have done [applause].

Mr. Speaker, on the aspect of Agriculture; weeds to seed, a programme that I launched last year providing seedlings for farmers in the constituency going fine and will be continuing from March this year, because we wanted some time to put some other things in place to go along with the programme and I will talk about that in a while. There are several farmers who would have benefitted in the valley and throughout the constituency. The Vermont Community Market, Mr. Speaker, must start this year. We have the land, we have the drawings done and it is a wonderful project and we have already secured some of the materials that are necessary. Form 2, school programme at the Buccament Primary School. Mr. Speaker, I have collected all the materials to build the necessary chicken pens and lettuce stands and so on that is needed for this project, whatsoever is produced is used at the school feeding programme.

Mr. Speaker, for 2011 I would have been giving vegetables and fruits and so on to that particular school almost every week. I have even bought wax apple from the former representative in the area, Jeremiah Scott to deliver to the school making it look, Mr. Speaker, are clearly establishing, Mr. Speaker, the aspect of friendship and reconciliation. I carry no bias, I loss, but I am still working. The Agriculture Practical Training Centre we have located..., we have the site with some construction work being done. We have 20 furniture for the classroom, it is actually farm and you established a classroom to train young people in the constituency over a period of time. That is a nice project, Mr. Speaker, and that too will benefit not only persons from South Leeward, Mr. Speaker, I believe there will be few persons because some folks coming from North Leeward has already contacted me on the project. You see I have spread my wings. When we talk about the youth awards, I have given, all the representative, former representatives and current representatives nomination forms for the South Leeward Youth Award. Dr. Slater got some, the Honourable Representative Nigel Stephenson got some and some was sent to the former representative Jeremiah Scott, because I do not want to think or I do not want people to think that it is a ULP award, it is a broadbased award and that is why we have done all that.

Mr. Speaker, there is a nice little project called, "The Catch um Project", and I am linking it with weeds to seeds, animal identification at its best, name tags, tattoos and a microchip the size of a rice grain to be place at the necessary part of an animal to identify him with its owner. Long gone the days when you could say a black belly sheep, they all look alike. Long gone the days that you could say a black and white cattle, cow, they all look close. In a case of disaster, Mr. Speaker, once the animal has that tag or the necessary it can be identified. When Praedial larceny takes its place we can easily catch up on individuals because the animal could be identified just by scanning. It is a wonderful project and I hope down the road that the Ministry of Agriculture could also use it as part of their national campaign [applause].

Mr. Speaker, spiritual development I have visited over 30 churches in South Leeward. I have visited almost all and there are few now under construction. I have tried to build a relationship with the pastors, deacons who understand how we go about building the constituency. You see, Mr. Speaker, long gone the days when the functions of a church are to get married, death or for just the regular service. Churches must understand that they need to develop proactive ways to fight the social ills in the communities and we have to find ways of working with them and I am doing just that.

Mr. Speaker, I am not the representative for South Leeward, I am only the ULP caretaker and as I have said earlier the Senator, but Mr. Speaker, South Leeward operates as if it is a constituency in Government and not in opposition [applause]. I buried all thoughts and I accept my loss the day after elections. I attended my funeral and that of Senator Frederick, I went to Casson Hill and then I went to Clare Valley and they sing wonderful songs, they sing, have you a passport to Parliament, well rendered, Mr. Speaker. I carry my own coffin but I buried it that day and I then continued to work to prove to people that there are indeed serious persons in this aspect of politics and this aspect of representation.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my Youth Arm, my Women Arm and the 2000 plus supporters in South Leeward who have supported me. One hundred and fifty food baskets for Christmas, books, pencils was given out to various areas and kids and children had parties all under the Senator; 31 gangs and jobbers, Mr. Speaker, over 300 persons get job work, got work during the Christmas season Mr. Speaker. You see a creative man Mr. Speaker, a labour man; a star man is motivated by the desire to serve and to achieve, not only by the desire to win or to

beat somebody. I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and wish you very best health for the rest of this year and I wish this bill a safe passage through this Honourable House. I am much obliged.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Senator Frederick well I had you down to come next. When you are ready?

**HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK:** Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members. Let me start by saying that I wish each and every Member and their families here today a most prosperous and a productive New Year complete with good health for each and every Member and of course every member of their families.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to contribute to the debate of the Appropriation Bill for 2012 and I think it is necessary, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, to start by reminding everyone and by reflecting the thoughts of the average Vincentian about what the budget means to them. The budget is to the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines a report from the Government indicating how it intends to get money, how much money it anticipates receiving and how it will prioritise its spending to the benefit of the people through the Ministries that are supposed to manage the areas in our lives that form the fabric of our Vincentian society and affords us the opportunities to work to develop ourselves in every way conceivable. The thinking Ministry by Ministry ought to be that the Ministry is charge with a tremendous responsibility to do its best in the particular areas of responsibility, to secure positive outcomes to the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

So it is an important exercise to look into the budget and to debate the bill to see what is feasible, to see how much the Government has accomplished, what it intends to accomplish so that in our debate we can fairly assess the success rate of the Government and by extension we can determine how we feel about the impact that the efforts of the Government have..., what the impact of the efforts of the Government is and how we realised it in our lives. So we ought to be able to make that assessment.

This is why I believe so wholeheartedly in what the Leader of the Opposition has said about the presentation made by the Honourable Minister of Finance who he described as a captain who cannot steer ship of state. Because to my mind, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, this budget simply is not sustainable and the fact that all of the time it is not sustainable means that the Government continues to fail the people and how the people feel the failure is in their pocket and in the quality of life which they have and continue to experience. The difficulties they continue to have to overcome...,

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Senator, just recognise the Deputy Speaker.

**HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK:** Certainly, certainly. Mr. Speaker, ensure that I do not lose anytime.

**HONOURABLE DEPUTY SPEAKER, DAVID BROWNE:** Continue please.

**HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK:** Now I am charged with looking into science, technology, and telecommunications and of course culture. What the budget address according to the Honourable Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance was suppose to present in his budget address said it is job creation, economic growth, financial stabilisation, fiscal rebalancing and social equity at a time of continued global

economic uncertainty. Let me say first and foremost that this Government has mismanaged this way before global uncertainty became the life wrath to which they decided to cling. We had several years of mismanagement punctuated by boasting of countercyclical measures which have now run their course and deficit upon deficit upon deficit have brought us to the realisation today by the Government that we are in hard times.

Now how does this translate for the culture man who cannot look to the Honourable Minister of Culture for a solution and I make that statement unhesitatingly because when I look at what is said about the state of culture in St. Vincent and the Grenadines by having regard for the Ministry of Culture, I can only say that if the captain of the boat is which is the Ministry of Culture is serious, then you would need to recognise that he is the captain and that he is expected to captain this Ministry. Why am I saying this Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members? The Ministry of Culture has been relegated to an after thought in the minds of the Government and why this is a bad thing is because job creation is possible if the creative and cultural industry is developed so that the cultural practitioner can own by his own capacity. He does not need a job provided for him; he has skills to actually earn as of his own rights.

So if we are serious about job creation we need to spend time on creating an environment where the creative and cultural industry can emerge to be a sector that can contribute to this economy. But that is not happening, why is not it happening? If we look at page 181 of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, the Ministry of Culture is not even reflected in the mission and on behalf of the former Minister who when she presented on the last occasion that she was in Parliament, the mission statement of the Ministry of then Urban Development, Culture, Labour and Electoral Matters had as its mission, to provide leadership in the socio-economic sectors and in the steer of governance by spearheading urban renewal and revitalization and what is important to me, facilitating the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage as a vehicle of promoting national pride and forging national identity.

So here we have a Ministry that had a mission of which culture was an integral part and I am convinced that the current Honourable Minister is not able to harness whatever progressed was made previously in this Ministry and move forward to offer job creation through the creation of a cultural industry and a creative industry. Let me indicate that in 2009 work was done to lay out the way forward, but if I look in the Estimates, I see no reflection of any work being done to carry on or implement the policy. But the policy exists so I suppose you could tick the box and say, well we did a policy. There are 313 and they were as at 2009; 313 writers, publishers, performers and producers of music in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 313 people able to earn from that skill and that skill alone. Have we worked, has the Ministry of Culture worked to give them a platform. Well Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, let me tell you I looked at the result indicators, the result indicators for the Ministry of Culture 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5 things for an entire year the Ministry of Culture was concerned with accomplishing 5 things. Of the five things 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 things were not completed. Everything according to the legislative concerns and this is what happen when a country has no money; no funds were released under the capital project to undertake legislative concerns of updating the national cultural policy.

Well let me save the Government some money, the national cultural policy should centre around implementing the strategic development plan for the creation of a cultural and creative industry in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. I have just saved you some money. You do not need to update the policy; you need to implement

the strategy. One of the most laughable, I listened to the Minister speak about Carnival Development and if you ask any person who worked in carnival this year, carnival needs to be looked at, to be revitalized that is the prevailing view of the cultural practitioner. He played the role in carnival because that is one of the two areas and times in the country when the cultural practitioner could earn from his craft.

One of the plans of the Government was to prepare a strategic plan, they are very good at making these, but not implementing them, to prepare a strategic plan 2011 – 2013 for the CDC and the strategic plan to benefit 2011 was due by the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011, carnival is in June - July 2011. So even in thinking how you should approach this strategy you already started out wrong. They said that preparation of the plan has commenced and completion is expected in 2012, but they did not say when in 2012 because if we go on the basis of what has happened, 2012's carnival would not benefit from an overhaul, 2011's carnival did not benefit so I am hopeful for 2013.

Mr. Speaker, here is an opportunity to motivate cultural practitioners to actually take a strain off of what Government is having to do in the absence of people..., we want to make money, you have to give people the environment where they actually could use their skills to earn for themselves. You do not have to find a job for them. Now something that really strengthen my view that the Minister of Culture is facing an insurmountable challenge where culture is concerned, today in speaking on culture which he give two minutes, he said, the AG's Chambers regarding the Attorney's General Chambers and speaking about piracy, he said, he will work along with the Chambers for the relevant legislation to curb piracy.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation has existed in St. Vincent and the Grenadines now for about seven years and the problem is that the police require training to be able to enforce the legislation and the previous Minister of Culture knew this, because when I was a member of the CCLSVG which was the body set up that created the Eastern Caribbean Collective Organisation for music rights in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, which is a collection's agency for those persons who write music and to who perform music, so that they could get their royalties from their intellectual property, this was one of the major concerns of the Minister and here we have a current Minister of Culture saying that they are going to create the legislation. He will work along for the relevant legislation. Well he ought to have said create, because this puts it in even a worse position, but Mr. Speaker, the absence of political will where cultural practitioners is concern affects every element of tourism of sports in this country, every element, every other sector would benefit from a vibrant cultural sector and this is understood. We hear mentioned of the first Vincentian who score a century. Why is not that person speaking to promote sport tourism in St. Vincent? Because you need to write it in a strategy, but that strategy will take three years to come to fruition if at all.

And culture demands more, the practitioners demand more, so I am offering a solution, give up the responsibility of being in-charge of the Ministry of Culture, let somebody else handle it, because the SVG AMP..., and I am looking now at the indicators for 2012, hold by the development of the creative and cultural industries, they were supposed to hold by the 30<sup>th</sup> September three seminars with stakeholders to assist with strengthening the institutional capacity of umbrella associations such as AMP, the Calypso Association, the Craft Association and the Performing Arts Guild, there is no..., oh I see here, they held one meeting and one lecture. So in an entire year they held one meeting and one lecture.

From my experience, Mr. Speaker, what is required is real interest and follow-up on the part of the Ministry [applause] to ensure that AMP gets the assistance. I am not sure the Minister is on their mailing list, so I would collect your email address and I will add it to their mailing list, because they indicated that they will be having a meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2012, my suggestion to the Minister is that he attend the meeting and make copious notes, listen to the practitioners who have the solutions for their industry, who know what they are facing and be serious, listen to the people and assist them to implement what is necessary to take the burden off of Government. That is the solution. How much time do I have Mr. Speaker?

**[HONOURABLE DEPUTY MR. SPEAKER DAVID BROWNE IN CHAIR]**

**HONOURABLE DEPUTY MR. SPEAKER:** [Inaudible]

**HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK:** Good. Now, Mr. Speaker...

**HONOURABLE DEPUTY MR. SPEAKER:** You have 25 minutes.

**HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK:** Very well, Mr. Speaker. I listened to the Minister with the responsibility for Telecommunications and from what..., from his presentation you get the sense that when something creates a noise in his blood and echoes in his bones that is the thing that gets attention. Well I wish to state here categorically, Mr. Speaker, as someone interested in technology it is neither creating a noise in his blood nor echoing in his bones. Technology is not a check the box sector, it cannot be by its very nature. You cannot say, internet check, children check, laptop check and let me start by saying, the initiative to equip our students and teachers with laptops is a fantastic one, I support it wholeheartedly [applause] because indeed we pioneered the idea in the New Democratic Party [applause] but it is not the end of the responsibility in technology. And what is so important in technology is that it is a real vehicle for economic growth if it is approach the way that the New Democratic Party is saying it ought to be approached. So fantastic thousands of people, thousands of children now have the capacity to access the internet which means that the load is increased, which means that they way that they access the internet cannot be a typical way. If a modem could take 50 users at a time you cannot equip a school with one modem and believe that 600 students would not overload it.

So you have given them access, have you checked with the teachers to find out how unreliable the access is? The fact that teachers now do not prepare lessons plan using this wonderful facility with which they have been provided because they cannot depend on the connectivity to be able to actually access the internet. Are we thinking about how we harness the technology, because it is a fantastic initiative indeed? So all of these young people have technology, wireless everywhere and indeed let me say because there are so many more users the price of internet connectivity should go down. So you must take the stakeholders and put them around the table because technology is not even moving at the pace of hard wiring somewhere, mobile technology is the direction in which technology is going. So their business model cannot be to sell somebody a phone, it must be to populate the phone with applications so that you make your money that way; 500 million people and that is

conservative, access face book. Every single major and minor business in the world advertises its wares there. You would laugh at that?

Mr. Speaker, are you aware that the operating system on the laptops is now obsolete? Mego is obsolete in the context of technology in the world, because the companies that came together to create Mego has disbanded so there is no real picture of how the upgrades are going to happen. You know when you have your computer and you turn it on and it says Windows is doing an upgrade and you have to spend five minutes waiting on that that is keeping your technology current, but Mego is not going to do that. Are we thinking, therefore, that because this is our situation we have to make sure the children maximize what they can do with that technology? So what are we doing? Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a document of the House, a photograph that I downloaded of a teacher in rural school from schooltalk.com a website and Mr. Speaker, what is she doing? Here she is, Mr. Speaker, she has 20 or so laptops and she looks like she is marking them in the traditional way. If that is not an epic fail I do not know what is!

Mr. Speaker, I enquired as to whether she was really marking the laptops and it was worse, the answer was worse than I expected. Do you know what she was doing, Mr. Speaker? She was checking the history of where the children had visited online to see whether they were going to inappropriate places on the internet. After the children already visited? There is a software system, it is actually available and I checked, it is available if the country wants it, they can actually be a special concession because you are using it as a country, call "PC Nanny" it stops the child from being able to access pornography and all the negatives [applause]. If we are serious about using technology to empower our children, Mr. Speaker, that is the direction we should go. You cannot just be happy and speak for two years about giving them a laptop. Give them the capacity to use the laptops safely and comfortably to benefit from it [applause].

Mr. Speaker, for three years now, for three years now Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Telecommunications has said on page 82, they keep repeating since 2010 to implement two online ICT courses and they will..., what they are saying they will do, what is important is they are saying they will include a Moodle interface for interactive teaching and learning. In he previous Estimates they said they were (oh yes) research the upgrading of the NCTI website to include Moodle which is an interface for interactive learning and teaching, right, interactive and learning simply means you could be taught by somebody you are interacting online with. So they are there teaching and you could see them, you can interface with them there through the computer, but you could actually see them teaching.

Mr. Speaker, three years, three years they are investigating Moodle. Well I investigated Moodle and the developer of Moodle says for the professional who he would consider to be impatient, here is a basic outline of the installation process which normally takes me only a few minutes, a few minutes, you are taking three years to investigate something that you could check our in a few minutes and that is the read me text that is part of the open source interface that is Moodle. Well Mr. Speaker, if technology is creating a noise in the blood and an echo in the bones of the administration, they have to seriously approach technology on a 24/7 basis. Technology must have a champion, technologists do not work 8 to 4, they are available all the time online and they are looking at trends and making changes so the pace of technology is not the pace of this Unity Labour Party Government who will spend an entire year talking about giving children laptops. Wonderful, how are they using them now? And as a consequence of this, we in the New Democratic Party have taken an initiative.

Mr. Speaker, I want to invite you to visit [www.vincyclasroom.com](http://www.vincyclasroom.com) [applause] that is a website we have created which gives children and their parents and teachers resources to which they can easily go to make this technology come alive [applause] and we hope that they will use their laptops to go there because the New Democratic Party is providing step two (2) that would take the Government on the basis of the evidence they presented three years to implement.

By the end of today you would be able to download and print your Common Entrance Pass Papers so that you can practice because the exam is coming up this year [applause]. The website is [www.vincyclasroom.com](http://www.vincyclasroom.com) and the reason it is under construction is because...

**HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS:** I am wondering if it is the same vincyclasroom that I was on today just about half an hour before I came back to Parliament. I logged in because I was trying to see what was happening on Facebook and I saw this thing and it caught my attention, I logged in. There is nothing on it. All it says is that this is recently inspired by the New Democratic Party, spearheaded by the shadow Ministers with responsibility for technology and so on and what's not, but there is nothing on it. It says there now under construction. I just want to know if that is the same website.

**HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK:** Mr. Speaker, permit me to give the Honourable Minister a free text lesson. Mr. Speaker, it took us five days to create, which means that it is a what in technology they call, an epic failure on the part of the Government, that they have yet to do anything, but we have heard that they will think about it this year and Mr. Speaker, if the Minister accessed my Facebook page which connects the vincyclasroom face book page with the website then you are to go one step further and peruse the website, maybe he could try to visit one of the pages that deals with how kids could learn their timetables in a fun fashion and share it on his own page.

**HONOURABLE DEPUTY MR. SPEAKER:** I think he was asking for clarity.

**HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK:** And I am clarifying. The page that he looked at via Facebook is the Facebook page that is an open forum for people to comment. I uploaded that page some days ago, yes, but December 15<sup>th</sup> 2011 is when we created vincyclasroom [interjection] even earlier and there is content and what is instructive is that parents are also emailing their contents and Mr. Speaker, it is so instructive that I was so wonderfully interrupted by the Minister, because he is giving me an opportunity to end by articulating the direction in which technology is going. Technology is now not dependent on individual to provide all of the content. Sharing of knowledge is the direction in which technology is going and that is why Facebook has 500 million users, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker that is why 3 million messages are sent in 20 minutes on face book that is why 1 million links are shared on face book that is why, Mr. Speaker, actually 48 percent of the world's young people say that they get their news on Facebook that is why 20 million applications per day are installed on Facebook and 250 million people interact with Facebook from outside the official website on a monthly basis across 2 million websites, Mr. Speaker, because technology is no longer I create it and it is there and I hug it. It is that I create it and you share it and you add your information to it and I want to thank the parents who have so willingly emailed to us information that can assist other students and teachers' en-grade is on the site, it is currently available to you

and your students can interact and that you could post your coursework for them to do and mark it there on line [applause]. Make the laptops work for you [applause].

There is everything right with that, Mr. Speaker, and it is a failing on the part of the Government that they are thinking so slowly that that has not even come up as an option. Mr. Speaker, it took me five days to create and I am no technician. What about the stars who work in the Ministry of IT, they could probably do it in one solid day and as well, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, it cost Mr. Speaker US\$200 to this idea that it requires millions and billions and trillions of dollars to accomplish and do you know what, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, from the start of February, Mr. Speaker, our virtual classroom will be available to anyone who visits the site. You are not required to log on to the site that is wrong terminology. You visit it, you visit the site and what is interesting is that, your Mathematics and the Common Entrance Curriculum will be taught for you through interaction with the teachers who are waiting for this Government to do the correct thing, but in the interim they would provide assistance to you [applause]. They will teach because they love teaching and they care about the students who are lamenting the loss of their tutelage. So Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker...

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

**HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK:** I am grateful. What is important, Mr. Speaker, is that the approach to technology must be marshalled by a champion and regardless of the best efforts of the Minister of Telecommunications it is clear that he is incapable of championing the sector in a way that will bring results to the people who currently have benefited only in so far as being given the tool. Mr. Speaker, you know what is instructive, what is instructive, Mr. Speaker, is that many people fear what they do not know, but here we have a sector that our young people can pilot given the appropriate foundation if step one is a laptop and access, then step two must be resources to access and if you are waiting three years in Government time to push the technology agenda by the time you are ready everything will be obsolete. Everything that you want to work with will be out of date. That is why in order to really benefit, Mr. Speaker, you need to be on the technology mission 24/7.

Now let us see what is happening, they are awaiting two years now to reduce access time to the Government website, which means to make it more efficient to log in. They are awaiting equipment from e-grip; they have been doing it for two years and let them use skype in the interim. In 2010 they were awaiting the money, in 2011 no funding realized again, a Government without money and in 2012 I do not see it mentioned. Oh yes, oh they still intend to install new PBXs for the police, hospitals and central government and they intend to do it twice. Now here is the classic, create a database that will catalogue Vincentians in the Diaspora, support the regional integration and Diaspora unit with databases teleconference in another IT related matters. Do a Face book page and you think that is a joke, but I am positive that every Vincentian in the Diaspora has access to Facebook and would willingly link, but you see, Mr. Speaker, perhaps, perhaps, Mr. Speaker, perhaps if they were...

**HONOURABLE DEPUTY MR. SPEAKER:** [Striking of the gavel]

**HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK:** Mr. Speaker, may I continue?

**HONOURABLE DEPUTY MR. SPEAKER:** Go ahead.

**HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK:** Okay well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps Mr. Speaker, perhaps Mr. Speaker, if the project is suppose to give \$50,000 or \$5 million \$500,000 to accomplish this, perhaps the easy solution of asking everyone..., their 2000 plus members Vincentians largely of the Pan Against Crime Page, I am sure that many of them living in the Diaspora, so there you have a first start, but no, we have a situation, Mr. Speaker, and this is my last point or Mr. Speaker, you could stop me and let me know when my time is totally out, because I continue to point out the absence of direction on the part of the Government so far as technology is concerned. Mr. Speaker, they are saying again in 2012 we can expect that they will implement two accredited online ICT courses at some point in time, they are going to conduct elementary ICT training at six LRCs something that has been on the books for some time and they want a complete census of all ICT equipment, again in a previous budget they call wanted to know their e-readiness, so they wanted an e-readiness assessment and that e-readiness assessment was at the point where a contract was signed and they were awaiting X, Y and Z but what happened, Mr. Speaker is this, the complete census is on the books for 2012 something that was on the books in 2010. So if you needed to know in 2010 what the status of your technology was by now I will save you more money and tell you that they are all outdated, in need of upgrade and so you can prepare yourself to replace, replace, replace because you have been waiting two years and in the speed of technology you are completely obsolete by today's stat.

So Mr. Speaker, I look forward to a day when technology will become a noise in the blood and echo in the bones of the Unity Labour Party Government. In the meantime the New Democratic Party is willing and able to assist the children, the parents and the teachers of St. Vincent and the Grenadines who have the technology but need something more. It is called [www.vincyclclassroom.com](http://www.vincyclclassroom.com) visit it today and make the technology work for you. I am much obliged to you Mr. Speaker [applause].

**HONOURABLE DEPUTY MR. SPEAKER:** I recognize the Deputy Prime Minister; give me a few minutes please.

**HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL:** Thank very much, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, let me say a pleasant and wonderful New Year to all within the sound of my voice, but Mr. Speaker, even while I do this I crave your indulgence to extend sincerest condolences to one of our teachers on the passing of her husband Mr. Christopher George who died suddenly yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, life is serious and Mr. Speaker, this is why we are standing in this Honourable House today. We are here because the majority of people in this country repose their confidence in the way that we work and so we are here. Year after year we come to this Honourable House with...,

**HONOURABLE DEPUTY MR. SPEAKER:** Excuse me Honourable Deputy Prime Minister, acknowledge the Speaker.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Continue, Honourable Member.

**HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was saying that year after year, political parties would have been coming to this Honourable House to present the budget for the year. When I was a young person, Mr. Speaker, I used to listen to politicians speaking for hours and hours and hours, sometimes I never understood, but I understood when I had the privilege of coming here.

Mr. Speaker, this is January 2012 and we are here debating the Appropriation Bill. Mr. Speaker, I rise to give my full support to this Bill [applause]. Mr. Speaker, but before I go any further having been in Government last year and having witnessed what would have happened to us in this country I turned my thoughts to Almighty God and I say, thank you God for the mercies that you would have showered on us during 2011.

Mr. Speaker, I was awakened from my bed in the absence of the Honourable Prime Minister and the phone calls kept on coming and coming and at this point, Mr. Speaker, I want to say, thank God for good people, our good technocrats within our various Ministries. We had a network going and one gentleman I am very proud of is Mr. Brian George. As the rains fell and there was mudslides that was the person on whom I called. Persons were on the other side crying and asking for help, but the young man, he answered his phone and he would say, give me time, it is still dark let us wait for morning light and then we would go quickly to help our people. Mr. Speaker, I am very glad for the wonderful people working in our Ministries and especially during the time of storm. God has been good to us [applause].

Mr. Speaker, I went up to Georgetown and on the way there was a certain place we could not pass and people just gathered. I saw a cattle that was still alive stuck between the stones, but, Mr. Speaker, I am saying this to say that no human life was lost and while we stood here last year and we debated the budget I remember saying, this budget must give us hope. It must give us hope for the future. We do not know what tomorrow holds. Much of the monies that we would need to spend, we have not yet collected, but we must have hope and we must remember the Anthem that we so often sing “what’er the future brings, our faith will see us through” and so by faith we are here presenting this Appropriation Bill.

Mr. Speaker, in our homes we need good leaders, in our schools we need good leaders, in political parties we need good leaders, Mr. Speaker, we in the Unity Labour Party have a leader who has been blessed, a leader who has a photographic memory, a leader who is well educated and well trained, a leader who supports in times when we need that support, Mr. Speaker, he would have been listening to hear what would have been happening all over the world and just like I can remember like Sir James had said at one time, when we would have fish in the Grenadines you will have no bananas, Mr. Speaker, it was quite prophetic maybe, but it was a word of wisdom, it was a word in time. I would have gone to Ecuador, Mr. Speaker, and we were discussing about the bananas and I remember at the end of our conversation we were told, at least the Saints, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Kitts Nevis and Dominica was there with us and, Mr. Speaker, we were told, “you will have to diversify” and that was a profound statement for us.

Mr. Speaker, our leader was saying to us not only in this Parliament but in this country, he was saying, “get the small things right”, do not waste, be prudent, manage well, he has been saying these things to us, Mr. Speaker. He even quoted something biblical about one of the twelve tribes of Israel Issachar and he was saying, know the times and if we must manage the times we must know the times. I want now to congratulate our Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Planning for his prudence, for his wisdom and for the direction that he points this country in [applause]. Today, Mr. Speaker, we are presenting a total budget for 2012 for \$793,009 million. There is a document that we were given in this House and I want to refer us to page 103 and hear what our leader says, he says, a complaining industry does not credible alternative make. My Government has put down its marker carefully and wisely in this budget in the peoples interest. It has presented a developmental budget fit for these challenging times.

Mr. Speaker, a question now arises. What has made the times challenging? And I refer us to page 1 of the document that he would have given us. It says on the last paragraph, this special period of extraordinary socio-economic challenges had its initial debilitating spark in the financial meltdown in the world's major economy, the United States of America in September 2008. This event swiftly metamorphosed into an economic depression in the citadels of the global capitalism, the worst such economic collapse worldwide since the Great Depression of 1929 to 1931. Mr. Speaker, the global economy page 3 says, "is in a dangerous new phase, global activity has weakened and become more uneven, confidence has fallen sharply recently, and downside risks are growing. Against a backdrop of unresolved structural fragilities, a barrage of shocks hit the international economy this year.

Mr. Speaker, this is when you have a leader with a vision, a leader who chooses his words so that the people of the country can understand what he says. Mr. Speaker, on page 7 he speaks to us of how we managed last year. He said, "Despite the difficulties in our Government's fiscal condition, we have managed, with some success, to engage in a sensible fiscal consolidation based on the twin principles of prudence and enterprise." Mr. Speaker, the word "prudence" is in my bones, it is in my blood too because I have been working at the grassroots' level with the poor telling them to use the little what they have to get what they want and especially in the area of credit unionism. "This has been achieved" he said, "through a mixture of initiatives and on-going actions grounded in public expenditure prioritization, enhanced efficiency, and controls; improved tax administration; the negotiation of sizeable grants and soft-loans; and an avoidance of commercial borrowing; creative and effective debt management; a reduction of waste and public expenditure efficiencies; and streamlining the operations of state-owned enterprises. Here is our leader telling us how we managed. He continues to ask us to manage well. Mr. Speaker...,

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Honourable Member, Deputy Prime Minister in her report on reference of the way ahead and quoting from the, I think is the Prime Minister's speech is in the effect indicating what the IMF report has recommended for St. Vincent and the Grenadines. So they are not the original thoughts of the Prime Minister, but rather they are those of the IMF being represented as I suspect to be [interjection] let me make an important point nah, she is crediting you for those solutions, the solutions are in fact the advice of the International Monetary Funds for which many of your Members have had their own difficulties and it is important to establish the difference.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** But if the..., you know you have to sit. If the IMF makes and recommendation the Prime Minister has to..., he has to either accept it or reject it. So if he brings it?

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Mr. Speaker, I have no difficulty with that, I am simply saying it ought to be indicated that the Prime Minister has accept it, the recommendation of the IMF and this is captive and reflective in his presentation. The way it is put over, one would assume that they are his own ideas and his own thoughts and they are in fact not.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** I cannot tell her how to coin her words...,

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Well I expected you to say that, Mr. Speaker.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** You expect me to say that.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Yes I expect you to say that.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Well why appeal to me.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Well I have to continually do that, Mr. Speaker, for the record.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Okay.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, if you may permit me. My Honourable friend knows, Member that it is not...

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Member is correct.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** is not a point of order and the issue which he has raised is a perspective which they have offered, a perspective which is false and which I shall again demonstrate when I wind up tomorrow to be false. It is an opinion which he can hold but it is not a point of order and he knows that and Mr. Speaker, I say Honourable friend, I know there is Honourable Member, but if he wishes to cast aside friend, I doubt whether he would want to do that. I am not even talking reconciliation here I am just talking..., this is a small two by two country.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Prime Minister [interjection] wait just a minute, arm let us..., this thing have come up time and time again, because it depends..., as a matter of fact I tend to think it is basically an emotional issue. There is sometimes when it could be accepted as Honourable friend and there are sometimes it cannot be and that is why I believe it is emotional, it is an emotional issue and what I feel let us stick to the protocol, Honourable Member and in that way we do not affect anybody's emotion in any particular way, Honourable Member, okay, thank you very much.

**HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Honourable St. Clair Leacock knows me very well; he knows that I am serious about serious things and I was speaking the truth about what is in the document that our Prime Minister presented. So that is how serious I am about it.

Mr. Speaker, I continue. Mr. Speaker, it would really be remised of me if I did not turn our attention to the captioned on the cover of this document before us. It speaks to "Job creation, economic growth, financial stabilisation, fiscal re-balancing and social equity at a time of continued global economic uncertainty." Mr. Speaker, on all of our Ministries we have statements that we must keep our eyes on, that we should not lose our focus and I am very happy that our Prime Minister has put this on the cover of his budget address.

Mr. Speaker, coming from an agricultural community on page 21 of the document I note something that would be good for the people of Marriagua to know and the people of this country, all our farmers, the intention of the Ministry of Agriculture is to increase production and productivity, Mr. Speaker, it has always been agriculture and will always be agriculture and what we are trying to do in our blessed country is to make sure that we can feed ourselves and also help our farmers to make sure that they make some money from their farming. And it says, it speaks to vegetables, root crops and tree crops, not only generally but to focus on 60 selected farms for a 20 percent increase and the technical support services will be provided, the 2000 farmers and linkages with

designated market entities will be facilitated for at least 90 quality farmers. Mr. Speaker, we have been trying to add value to the primary product and we are going to continue in 2012.

When we put out our first manifesto we said to our farmers that we are not going to go out of bananas, but that we were going to diversify around bananas. But, Mr. Speaker, in the business of agriculture the farmers cannot go it alone and so the Ministry has partners in this venture and we speak of CARDI, we speak of FAO and WINFRESH, we have VINCY FRESH and it is doing very well now, WINFARM, we have the Input Warehouse, we have our Farmers Associations, we have our women in farming and Mr. Speaker, I am so happy for the farmers of this country that we are not going to give up, we are going to continue to have hope and to continue our farming practices. We have to build on what we have.

Mr. Speaker, we say times are hard, yes; there are many persons who have never depended on getting a job from the state. They have always tried to help themselves but we have got challenges. We worked very hard when the Moko disease hit our crops, Mr. Speaker, I know of certain persons who had more than one farm and they have lost all of them, but Mr. Speaker, they continued to do their farming, their backyard farming, they continued to plant the root crops and we are trusting that as time goes on that we would be able to come back again and plant more and more.

Mr. Speaker, in Animal Husbandry I am so very happy for the Ministry of Agriculture in that we have personnel and they are dressed like police, they are dressed in brown and they go about in our farms and they try to question our farmers and to educate them as to what we are trying to do, to help them to get their cards so that when they sell they can have their identification and Mr. Speaker, this is the way that our Government is working.

In the capital budget for 2012 sizeable resources has been allocated to Agriculture, Rural Transformation and Forestry, the main items of which are \$500,000 as a local contribution to post Tomas Agricultural Rehabilitation, \$4.93 million under BNTF to implement projects in rural communities, \$340,000 for forest protection and sustainable livelihood opportunities, for forest users \$1.27 million to produce machinery and equipment for livestock production and to provide training for our farmers.

Mr. Speaker, when we came into office we had a rundown fish market and rundown fish markets in different places in this country. This Government took the initiative and we tried our best to improve the conditions. Mr. Speaker, at one point we could not sell our fish abroad and we had to look at the guidelines and try to come up to mark. It was not only the physical infrastructure but we had to train our people. Mr. Speaker, it was no easy tasks. We go to the fish market today and we see them, they are wearing white clothes, we see them with their ice and we see that it is different. The market is better and I have been speaking to them just recently and asking them please to keep very good standards as we have to have the European Union come in and make sure that what conditions we are working under that they are good and that whatever we present to our people would be clean and fresh and good. Mr. Speaker, our fisher folks are working hard and we even asking them now to make sure that they become members of the National Insurance Services because we know that they are working with themselves and one day they will not be able to ply their trade so much, they will be old and when you are old you really need something to help yourself.

Mr. Speaker, there is an old adage which sometimes tell us that when you do not know you do not speak and that is wisdom. Mr. Speaker, in this country at this time the Education Revolution has touched on every home in St. Vincent and the Grenadines [applause]. Our students are happy, Mr. Speaker and especially in the recent past, when they would have had their own netbooks that they can use with their teachers. Mr. Speaker, it is not good sense for anyone to come in this Honourable House and try to cry down what we have been doing. It is an excellent project and the country knows that and has said that. Mr. Speaker, in the 2012 budget \$147.5 million is provided for education or 18.6 percent of the total budget.

Mr. Speaker, we have a Ministry that works hard. There is no cut off time for us. Our ears are always tuned to hear when our telephone would ring and, Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge in the audience my Permanent Secretary and the rest of the staff [applause] staff I salute you. We have been doing good, we have been working well and education is on the move. Everything we do [applause] revolves around the child. I do not know if Mrs. Ramsamooj is there but I want to salute Mrs. Ramsamooj for the hard work that she would have done with the reprographic unit in rolling out those net books throughout the length and breadth of St. Vincent and the Grenadines [applause] a Curriculum Unit and by extension all our teachers.

Mr. Speaker, in last year's budget we spoke of \$43 million to be used out at the Community College. Mr. Speaker, I dare say, nothing limits excellence, nothings. As we spoke to the country, Mr. Speaker, we lifted up in the way forward, three words to our children, dignity, discipline and achievement, we explained and we exhorted. Mr. Speaker, we also said to them, it is education for formation, for information and for transformation. We are preparing our children for what is to come in the next generation, but, Mr. Speaker, I crave your indulgence that I would give for verbatim the mission statement of the Ministry of Education and it is "To provide all persons of the state especially the youth with opportunities, appropriate to their development needs through the provision of polity education, academic, technical, vocational, moral, physical and sports which will equip them with the values, attitude, knowledge and skills necessary for creating and maintaining a productive, innovative and harmonious society."

Mr. Speaker, one of our central challenges, one of the central challenges of developing states is for Governments to direct public resources towards sports and Mr. Speaker, if Governments direct public spending towards the needs of the people, if Governments will be able to foster growth, human and social development and reduce poverty, the surest way out of poverty is through education. Mr. Speaker, the revolution continues. A lot of work would have been done in our Ministry and I was explaining to someone just the other day and I said, sometimes in some of our Ministries we are able to stand in front of a camera and we can show the nation what we are doing, but in the Ministry of Education, in the classroom when we have to hold a child's hand and show that child how to write his or her name we cannot put that on the television and this is why I salute our teachers today [applause].

As we move on, Mr. Speaker, we are drafting regulations for the Education Act of 2006 and development of the new education sector development plan. Mr. Speaker, we believe in our Ministry that policy must be bolstered why the legal framework. We are working towards the development of the education plan 2012/2017. But Mr. Speaker, the ESDP concentrated on ten subsectors, each with its own goals and policy objectives. Mr. Speaker, we must manage in education. Our administration must be strong and we must govern that which is in our care.

Mr. Speaker, in this country when we came to office Early Childhood Education was not properly carried. Many persons with a room in their houses and somebody who does not have a job they get them and they brought our children together. As we visited we found out that some of them even tried to teach them to write at that early age and we decided in the Ministry and in our Government that they must get a good head start. It is always good to start well at the beginning. Mr. Speaker, we have done great work in setting up centres in Sandy Bay, Spring Village Methodist, Lowmans Windward Anglican, Calliaqua Anglican, Colonarie Government, Park Hill Government, Dickson Methodist, Rose Hall Government, Belair Government. Mr. Speaker, Argyle Primary, Cane End Government, Marriaqua Government, Langley Park, Owia, Bequia Anglican Primary, Troumaca Primary, these areas are enriched and we know that for a fact that our little children will be doing better in the next five years.

Mr. Speaker, our Prime Minister was at pains as he delivered his budget address. He give some details, Mr. Speaker and I am saying this in his presence, I want to let him know that his name is a household name, his name will always be called because of the major thrust in education. Mr. Speaker, the primary school, this morning I listened here and I heard an Honourable Member speak about the public assistance, but I just want to shed a little bit of light here, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it was geared for the indigent poor and when there are certain exigencies you come to the help of those people. Mr. Speaker, in our country we do not yet have compulsory education and hence the reason why sometimes we have to go to the help of mothers who are playing the mother-father role in their homes. Mr. Speaker, if education is not compulsory we cannot do anything to a parent who does not send her child to school. She might say it does not have any breakfast, or it do not have certain things to give to the child and so our Government makes sure that we help these people. Many a times they come to us and we help them.

Mr. Speaker, primary and all age school education is moving on. Even while we were distributing our netbooks there were some persons because of their political coloration, they did not want to come and partner with us, but in some cases the children compelled them to do so. Mr. Speaker, about 61 primary schools have 980 teachers and 13,705 students, Mr. Speaker, we are building our country through education. I now look at the secondary part of it.

Mr. Speaker, there are 26 such institutions, seven Government assisted, Mr. Speaker, when we came to office we must never forget this is a time when we need to remember and to remind our nation that it is only 39 out of every hundred students who passed the Common Entrance. The others you may ask a question, where did they go? They went many places. But Mr. Speaker, a Government that loves young people, a Government that cares said no, the resources we have are limited, but we are going to do something to make sure that we give a chance to every child twelve years and above.

Mr. Speaker, we built our country concrete basis and in some cases we were able to use the 5/8 ply and make sure that there was a place for them. But that was not all, to bring them together was not all, we had to train our teachers because teachers cannot give what they have not got and so we started training in various areas so that our children will be well taught. Mr. Speaker, today if there is a child who is not getting an education it is there own fault. It did not only stay there Mr. Speaker, but because of our foreign policy our leader was able to attract scholarships so that our children can go and further their education. But Mr. Speaker, we did not only

think of those persons, those children who were strong, we thought of those who were physically challenged and so special education was given some priority.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy when I go to see them. Up in Georgetown, I went up there [applause] and there were tears in the eyes of Dr. Stange and His Excellency Cenio Lewis. We went to take monetary gifts to that school and at the end of our speaking to them the teacher asked one of them to say thank you and Mr. Speaker, the reason we cried was that he said, we are so thankful and we are so glad to see you today because many people do not give us any attention. But this Government is giving them that attention [applause].

Adult and continuing education, Mr. Speaker, our Learning Resource Centres are opened on evenings. Our young people who did not have a chance at finishing primary school, some of them, they are able to go back now and even write [applause] external examinations. Mr. Speaker, up at Richmond Hill we see our modern library, we see the documentation centre and our archives, all of this is to bolster our work in the business of education. Mr. Speaker, I continue to tell us of the programmes that we are hoping to do in 2012. We are hoping to improve in supervision and the monitoring of the delivery of the curriculum of teaching and learning.

Mr. Speaker, we are having a framework. In times past what we did we focused on teaching and learning. Mr. Speaker, there is a programme in the schools that was done by all our teachers and it is called “hats off to reading”, it was done in a very creative way because reading poses a challenge to our children and today I can safely say that there has been improvement. But we need to go a step higher, a step further, our focused for 2012 would be on school inspection and supervision, leadership and administration. Mr. Speaker, I know for a fact that once we are prudent, once we are serious with what we are doing our teachers will have to step up their game. We will be calling on the parents to work along with the teachers so that we will have better standards in our schools.

Our Education Officers will be called upon and I daresay, Mr. Speaker, they are really working hard. But whilst we have life, we have hope, we have strength and we love teaching. We will be focusing on students’ achievement; we will be focusing on the quality of teaching the school, the quality of learning in the school, the quality of leadership and management, the behaviour and safety of our students. Mr. Speaker, accountability and responsibility go hand in hand. These are things that we cannot see with the naked eye but the teacher knows how to do it.

Mr. Speaker, I got some correspondence from UNESCO and it is bringing some good news for us. The ambassador had written he said, we attended as a new member of the committee the fifth ordinary session of the Inter-governmental Committee of the Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression. I heard the Honourable Member a while ago and she was belabouring what she thought was not going right in culture and cultural expressions but we are going to get that much needed help, because this is the way we work in education, we have to work through partnership. So he said, I am delighted to inform you that the committee approved with a high evaluation of 35 out of 40 St. Vincent and the Grenadines project related national cultural policy reform and awarded the requested budget of US\$43,605 [applause].

Mr. Speaker, it is not only that but for the education sector he said we have benefited this year from three programmes in the education and fellowship sectors and advanced training programme in educational planning

and management in Parish which has been allocated to Mr. Junior Jack statistical officer in the Ministry of Education selected amongst many candidate. Secondly fellowships under the joint sponsorship of UNESCO and Israel, under educational methodologies youth at risks, preventing student dropouts and facilitating reintegration and thirdly, recently the project, combating the challenge of HIV and AIDS among vulnerable young women in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Mr. Speaker, this was from UNESCO and UNESCO is helping us out a great deal. There is a desk in the Ministry of Education and we have received all this good news from them.

Integration of ICT in curriculum in primary schools and Mr. Speaker, we heard so much about Facebook that I wonder if it was only Facebook that was in ICT. Mr. Speaker, we have an excellent team in the Ministry of Education. He who knows not and know not that he knows not, we shun him. Mr. Speaker, our teachers are trying. There are lots of new areas that we must explore, but this is not the way teachers work. It is not to come in the House and pontificate and think that we know it all, that is not so and I want our teachers who would have been listening to pat yourselves on the shoulder and say, yes we are doing a good job. We are working with all, Mr. Speaker, for teachers professional development. We are working with Caribbean Knowledge Learning Network the (CKLN) and we are to establish a regional framework.

Mr. Speaker, in all that we do, when we speak of the intelligence curve we know that we have a few who are very, very, very bright, the most would be in the middle curve and on the other side of the curve we would still have one or two who cannot make it. We are quite aware. Mr. Speaker, I say this to say to this Honourable House that remedial work is an integral part of the work of the Ministry of Education. Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell us a success story. I would like to quote it here from this document Mr. Speaker. For the academic year 2011/2012 there is a resident population of 24 students and there have been nine referrals to the SSU for counseling that is the police. The officers at the Students Support Services Unit conduct onsite visits especially at the primary school level in order to provide support for students there. For Mr. Speaker, we have problems, behavioural problems within the school system. At the beginning of 2011/2012 academic year 16 residents students of the unit transitioned, Mr. Speaker and I will repeat it, transitioned into mainstream secondary schools into Form 1 and 2 Mr. Speaker, so all is not lost. As we work with them we are getting results. Reports thus far indicate that the students are performing satisfactorily in their academic sports and in their social life. The unit is staff with teachers and counselors who attend to students academic and behavioural needs direct intervention with them and with their parents.

Mr. Speaker, this is something new for us. Education Research Information and Communication Technology a department is now to be established and the sum of \$320,769 have been allocated. Mr. Speaker, this programme was created in 2011 and has its major objectives effective integration of information and communication technology into the teaching and learning process. So it is not as easy as the Honourable Member think it is that we can come in here and say who can or cannot go onto Facebook. Wrong, it is not the way we behave in this Honourable House. We must come here and [applause] and Mr. Speaker, sometimes it hurts that we do not look listen and learn, we feel that people are out there and the are listening to us and we feel that we are going to get a percentage grade because we can shout and speak things that are not relevant to the debate.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, the document we have to have an Education Planning Unit and this is also going to help us in putting forward our programmes. Mr. Speaker, there is something here that I want to emphasise and as part of our mission to develop our Human Resource Capacity Government continues to support the demand for tertiary education in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. In 2010/2011 a total of \$12,336,177 was approved under the economically disadvantaged programme which afforded some 211 students from disenfranchised households to attend university. This programme continues to be administered by the National Student Loan Committee and is financed under the umbrella of the National Student Loan Company Limited.

Mr. Speaker, we are expending great sums of money in education and I pause to make this call please, let us hold each others hands in the next few years we should have a literate St. Vincent and the Grenadines [applause]. Mr. Speaker, lately we have been looking at our subject areas more and more closely and we have purpose to put subject panels for Math, Science, and English education and it is to further improve the quality of our educational outcomes at all levels. At all levels, Mr. Speaker, of the educational system and I can tell this Honourable House about the composition of the subject panels. First an education officer, second subject experts, subject teachers of noted competence, CXC examiners and experienced markers, lecturer of the Division of Teacher Education of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College and we are not forgetting our retired teachers who still have the expertise for our primary subsector.

Mr. Speaker, the panels are intended to promote teacher effectiveness in the respective subjects while analyzing each syllabus. The syllabus has to be followed. Mr. Speaker, we must be advising our teachers on the selection of appropriate teaching/learning resources, proposing strategies and approaches to teaching incepts. Mr. Speaker, we look at the continuous professional development of our teachers and keeping teachers abreast of the requirements of the various syllabi ensuring that teachers' content knowledge is adequate. Our teachers must be brighter than our children; they must be able to teach all the children in the school. They must know and they must be able to have the willingness to do their research and to make sure that they do well.

Mr. Speaker, we are also working to complete unfinished programmes of learning and our teacher guides in Mathematics, Language Arts, Social Studies, Creative Arts, Health and Family Life Education, Foreign Languages, I am talking about French and Spanish for Grades K to Grade 6. Mr. Speaker, we are trying to support the development of a programme of study for Information Technology for Grades K to Grade 9 and we are supporting the development of a programme of study for History and Geography for Grade 7 to Grade 9. We find Mr. Speaker, long ago we use to be doing these subjects but after a while there was a big broad heading called "Social Studies" and we forget, yes our people must be able to know about their country, to know about the Caribbean, to know about the world and we do find that this is done enough.

Mr. Speaker, we do not only do these academic subjects, but Mr. Speaker, I want to pause now and congratulate the division in the Ministry of National Mobilisation [applause] Mr. Speaker, today even as I speak I give God thanks for Credit Unions. In this day when times are difficult the Credit Unions are doing a great job especially for the poor people of our country. Mr. Speaker, when we first began I can remember being one of those crusaders, I remember speaking to a Parent/Teacher Association and they asked me to shelve it until another time. Mr. Speaker, I wondered what I should have done. What did I do? I went past the class and I sold the Credit Union message, Mr. Speaker today, that school has a large sum of monies. We cautioned our teachers, I can remember being very tough on one of them who thought that he could have borrowed a child's money and I

said, it is jail or money, he paid back the money and he went away. Mr. Speaker, today we have 87 school cooperatives.

We thank God for our children. They are becoming thrifty; they know how to use what they have. I remember in a poor community over in South Central, I remember we use to have on Friday afternoons what we called “a sing say”, those children if we wanted to go on a field trip they did not have the money to pay for the transportation, so we collected the money in that way and also we were doing that to help them to know that it was good to be in the cooperative. Mr. Speaker, last year I spoke about this and I wish to reiterate that in October of 2011 a cooperative department collaborated with the Ministry of Education and the Credit Unions, Kingstown Coop, General Employees, the St. Vincent Union of Teachers and we recognized students and teachers who have performed and worked remarkably well. Mr. Speaker, the work continues in 2012.

Mr. Speaker, how can I take my seat without saying something about the International Airport? Mr. Speaker, with the fallout in our bananas we are doing our root crops but work has already began. In the valley from which I come root crops are being sent on Ameri-jet to the people in America. They are eating food from Marriacqua. Mr. Speaker, we are trying very hard to develop our tourism sites and we know that we want the tourist to come. I pray that this year that we are going to have more partners in the building of the International Airport.

Mr. Speaker, crime, crime, I did listened to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition as he spoke about the charter that they have suggested. Social and Redemption charter, Mr. Speaker, in our schools we do not teach religion, but being a Christian community in the syllabus we have stories about Jesus, we have stories that Jesus told, we do poems on kindness, on honesty, on forgiveness, each day we meet with our students we give daily exhortations. Mr. Speaker, many a times what is taught in our classrooms is untaught in the homes. Some of the parents that came off we are still trying to open our arms to bring them into the fold, but few will not come, but Mr. Speaker, the answer to doing anything that is good must come from the heart, Mr. Speaker, it must come from within. Mr. Speaker, we read of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness and self-control. How can develop these? Our children have to be molded and through all the little stories and everything that we use, this is how we try to mold our students.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Education in all our schools, we are going to continue to do that work. Mr. Speaker, there is something that would have been troubling me for a while. Mr. Speaking, since ever the Estimates were presented I heard negativism from the other side of the House and Mr. Speaker, it was surrounding a house and a car, the repair of the house and a car for our Honourable Prime Minister. Mr. Speaker, in this country it seems we have no respect at all for our leaders and I am asking us that we consider what I am saying this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, I want to give a little story and it is about a man called “David” and after the prophet Samuel had died, David went to Carmel he and his men and Mr. Speaker, he was hungry. He asked to have food, the gentleman said and who is David, I am not going to give him my food, but David was the leader. Someone told his wife and her name was Abigail and Abigail said, no, you cannot refuse the leader something which is good for him and so whatever David had asked for she sent it to David and went herself and bowed before the King and said, sir I am so very sorry that this was how my husband treated you, but I have brought them, please do

not fight and David was pleased with the way the woman handled it. Our leaders are chosen for us, they are given for us and Mr. Speaker and we need to respect them more than that [applause]. Why should we want our Prime Minister to sleep in a leaky house? And I was really surprised to hear it from my Honourable friend, Honourable St. Clair Leacock; I was really surprised to hear it from you. Yes, Honourable Member I was really surprised because you know that I know that you know better. You know better than that, but not for political sake that you will say this or you want to say that our Prime Minister is extravagant, no.

I can remember as a member of National Youth Council I went to that House, I went there with Mrs. Lucy Cato and there was a blue room and she entertained us, the peoples house, it is the peoples house it is not only for our Prime Minister, but it would be for Prime Ministers to come and it could be you. You are not laughing at that [laughter], yes, but I am only saying that to say that there is a necessity. Our Prime Minister is not one who is extravagant. He is not one to ask for things. I think he has Sir James' chair over there still. Am I right Prime Minister? The chair is still there. He has not changed it. Yes it is still there and he is not an extravagant person and when we think of the car, do we want him to have to change cars in the middle of the street? No it is not working well and this is the reason..., his car [interjection] yes, and this is the reason that it has to be changed and Mr. Speaker, it does not speak well of this Parliament for us to say this. And I ask please that we would consider the utterances that we make and respect our Prime Minister regardless of what we think.

Mr. Speaker, as I speak, there is a team from the USA they are called "The Good News Team". Good News Team would have been coming here for more than 20 years. They would have been supplying things for the hospitals, for the schools, they would have been building homes for the homeless and once again they are here and they are working in our state. I want to say congratulations to them for all that they would have been doing in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Mr. Speaker, I want to turn to our women. The women of this country are abused, refused and accused by many of our men. Mr. Speaker, it is not good enough I want to ask our young women in particular, to dress themselves properly. I know that sometimes their mode of dress is not good at all and it is important that they dress themselves and so give temptations to our men. I know that many a times they do this, but our men can sometimes pull them up a bit, speak to them and say, no, say no. They have all their mammary glands outside some of them and they need to know that there are two good reasons why we were given these glands. Yes and I am speaking as a woman because it hurts me at times to see the way we dress even sometimes for church and going to funerals and we are out there, some of our women are almost naked. And Mr. Speaker, these are some of the little things in society that we need to pay attention to. How many of us know the two big uses for the breast of woman? How many of us know, one is to suckle the young and the next one is to give comfort to her husband. I do not know [laughter] I do not know..., and these are little things that our girls need to know and our women and this is why sometimes one of the first words that the little baby say, it is mama because it is the mammary gland why she is called "mama" yes [applause].

Yes Mr. Speaker, but on a serious note, we need, Mr. Speaker, we need to educate our girls. Give them a chance. We need if they make any mistakes, if they do not do the things that are right we do not have to kill them, we do not have to chop them, and we need to have that love in our hearts. Mr. Speaker, we have to remember who woman is. Woman is mother, woman is sister, woman is aunty, woman's hands are the hands that rock the cradle and as a woman myself, Mr. Speaker, I am asking that each parliamentarian, each of us we

do our best as we meet our groups that we speak to them. We need to encourage our girls. We see them straying on the streets, sometimes they stray on the streets and if you meet them do not be afraid to call the Ministry of Education. I know that there was once a time in one of our games shops some of them use to run away and they would go into these toilets and lock themselves away, but because people would have seen them and they would have spoken to us, so we would have been able to get them to go back into the classroom and this is part of the Education Revolution. The part that any of us can play is to help our students to go into the classroom where they would learn soft skills.

Mr. Speaker, something is very troubling to me and it is as the school reopened that we have to close because of littering. Mr. Speaker, I want to bring this prospective to this Honourable House. But now that there is fallout in bananas the rodents that are around they have to travel longer distances to look for food. Mr. Speaker, they leave their droppings on grass, they leave their droppings on many places and if they leave their droppings on grass, our animals may eat the grass and there is a serious disease called "Leptospirosis" which spreads. It can be spread by cats eating rats, Mr. Speaker, this is something that we need to note. In one of our Caribbean countries this did happen and quick attention had to be given. I would not like to see this happen in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Mr. Speaker, let me say once again happy New Year to the people of Marriaqua. I want to say thanks I have been working with you for a very long time since age 17. I want to say that I appreciate every good word, every good deed that you would have done unto me. We would continue to build our constituency. If you notice in front of the Police Station Zinger and the Teviot meet and waters are great from up in the hills, Mr. Speaker, reforestation was done in order that we can get potable water in our villages and many a times the rivers overflows their banks. The gabions were there and they have begun to collapse, but there is a provision in the Estimates for this. This housing programme we want to continue that.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** 15 minutes.

**HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Up in Massacre we have begun, but we still have some other technical work to be done and those of you with whom I would have been speaking, you can expect that we are going to continue. The road there is very terrible. I understand and I thank you for understanding as we discussed.

Mr. Speaker, when we took office, the library in Marriaqua was rundown. Mr. Speaker, water use to flow in and wet up the parcels and I thank National Properties for rebuilding for us. Today we have library service from 8 to 8 in Marriaqua. CED Office had said that they were going to pack up and leave but we have found a space for them in our Adult Education Office and so entrepreneurs can go there and learn something and ask the questions they need to have answered.

Mr. Speaker, sports in Marriaqua. Mr. Speaker, we have had many dry hours because of the topography of our place. The place where we play we had to dig from one height right down and where we have stopped the grass cannot grow very well, they closed it for many a times, but the grass is not growing very well and until we can find an alternative way I ask you to expect that I would call on you for us to work together and see what we can do [interjection] yes and I trust that you would help me. You will? Say yes! [Interjection] yes, very good

[laughter], yes I know you are my friend. We have an abattoir, Mr. Speaker, and because we do not have much land we have it close to the Levi Latham Centre but we are looking for a place where we can relocate it so that we can have our meat, the many of the people from Kingstown and other places would come up on a Friday evening where we socialize and they roast liver and breadfruit and pork and all sorts of things so the community comes together.

Mr. Speaker, in 1960 there is a building that was built by the people of Marriaqua and I really want to keep it. In those days we use to carry a bunch of bananas on our heads and the man name Levi Latham of blessed memory, he asked for one shilling, the people who worked at the Boxing Plant use to get \$5 for two days and he asked for that shilling in order to help to build a community centre. The centre is in a very rundown situation and I am hoping that we can have repair for the use of our people. We know in this life that everybody does not believe in God, because some of us we have our own Gods, but round at Dumbarton we want to have our own shed where we can meet and sometimes we pick up people and sometimes you can take them, you can call the community together, you can speak to them when it rains, they can shelter and we want to put that chapel round at the back. That is a place that was given by Mr. Minors for the burial of the dead and we want to keep it good.

We were promised the Golden Years Centre and I trust that it is going to come on stream for this year. Three of our primary schools have been fenced and what I am eager and looking forward to see is the Levi Latham Health Centre expanded by the Ministry of Health. Minister Mc Kie I want to thank you in advance for what you are going to do. Marriaqua has many people. It is centrally there. We have our own ambulance, we have so many things that the people in the Diaspora have given to us and we want to reach out and to help, but it would be great for us to have that expansion done.

In Evesham, those people at Evesham used to have to go over to Calder or come down into Mesopotamia and one lady said to me one day, I was to have done a fasting blood sugar test, but the distance was too far for me to go, I was hungry and so I ate and turned back and I went home and I want to thank the Ministry of Health for what they would have done for us. Mr. Speaker, in Marriaqua BRAGSA is doing a great job. I was able to ride smoothly on the road last night as I travelled home from work and I want to commend the entire team in BRAGSA.

Mr. Speaker, we would have been here with you year after year, you and your wonderful staff. We call to get help and you have always been there to reach out your hands and help us. I want to wish you, Mr. Speaker and all members of your staff good health, great strength. At this time, Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines that the budget before us one for the times. Nothing extravagant but one that has been properly put together by the technocrats in the Ministry of Finance, they have been very thoughtful. You have to tell them if you make a request, you had to tell them why you wanted it and what for and if your reason was not good you would not have had it.

Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed working along with them and I must say thanks. Mr. Speaker, our collections have to be made. Mr. Speaker, we have to be serious about what we do and on that note, Mr. Speaker, I want to say thanks to Prime Minister Dr. Gonsalves, to my colleagues here, to our parliamentarians on the other side, once again to my illustrious staff, hard-working staff, thank you so much. The year ahead, promises to be challenging, but we

know that we are striving for excellence and nothing is going to stop us. I want at this time, Mr. Speaker, to commend this bill for an easy passage through this Honourable House. I am obliged [applause]

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Member for North Leeward, I recognize you.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, I have been advised that there may be a couple more speeches this evening, but the caterers are here so perhaps this should be time when we can take a half an hour break and come back at 6:30 p.m.

Accordingly I beg to move that this Honourable House do stand suspended for half an hour.

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

**Question put and agreed to.  
House suspended at 5:55 p.m. (break)  
House resumed at 6:35 p.m.**

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Just a moment. When you are ready, eh.

**HONOURABLE ROLAND MATTHEWS:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, it gives me great pleasure to stand before you to make my presentation on the budget for 2012. But before I do so, Mr. Speaker, I wish to join with the Minister of Education in expressing my sympathies and condolences to the family of the late Mr. Christopher George. Mr. George was my schoolmate. He was one class above me. His wife was in my class and we graduated together. So it is a young man I know very well and I felt shock yesterday when I learnt of his passing but I know later on in another meeting of the House we will pay homage and respect in a more profound manner.

Mr. Speaker, I have sat and I have listened and I asked myself, where exactly I should start in terms of my contribution to this 2012 budget debate. Mr. Speaker, as a person who represents a community in rural St. Vincent and the Grenadines I am very much concerned when I look at this budget that there is hardly any hope for the people of rural St. Vincent and the Grenadines [applause]. Mr. Speaker, as you would know the most of the people rural St. Vincent are the poorer class of people. They are people who work the lands and people who fish in the seas for a living. But all I am hearing, Mr. Speaker, is an attempt to show this Honourable House and this Nation that keeping you on public assistance or giving you a handout is the way to go. Mr. Speaker, I beg to differ. I beg to differ because the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines on a whole deserve much better.

I want to quote from page 8 of the Prime Minister's Budget Address, I want to quote the paragraph that begins, this sensible management of the Government's fiscal situation has not been easy nor has it been achieved without hiccups or some painful tradeoffs. For example, declining revenues occasioned by the economic downturn and weaknesses in tax administration have prompted the Government to delay the implementation of certain capital projects. Mr. Speaker, we all know in this Honourable House that when it comes to ease the frustration or to create employment it has to do more so with how your capital budget is implemented. But the fact that the Prime Minister is admitting that it was difficult or impossible to implement some of the capital

budget, give me reasons to believe that this year in St. Vincent and the Grenadines things are going to get tougher.

At the end of that said paragraph, Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister continued, thus sticking to over-arching and desirable priorities, inevitably involves curtailing expenditure in some other areas; the enduring queries always are which areas get what and how. Mr. Speaker, this is the choice that every household in St. Vincent and the Grenadines has to make when the economy is this bad. Have to ask themselves, what are they going to give priority? to and to couple this, Mr. Chairman, having admitting that things are bad, Mr. Speaker, having admitted that our solution is to increase property tax and bring an increase in water.

Mr. Speaker, we asked ourselves, are these measures going to impact positively on the lives of the Vincentian masses or let me use the language that is customary used in this House for the entire couple days of debate, the poorer class of people, are they going to benefit, Mr. Speaker, with a new tax regime? I beg to differ. The people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines especially those at the lower echelons, they are going to feel it most because they have less in their pockets already and they will have to dig deeper when the new water rate is here and also when we implement the new tax system in terms of the market value taxation.

I heard the Prime Minister Mr. Speaker, as if he was making the point I should say about the fact that in the rural St. Vincent and the Grenadines and he looked at it as a very complex situation where it is next to impossible to find labour so that the farms could produce. Mr. Speaker, the farming community in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, some tradition has been done by small farmers that are the nature of farming in St. Vincent and the Grenadines; small farmers are the ones who till the lands. They are the ones whose family members would use whatever little resources they have and put all of their efforts into the land.

Over the years we have seen the decline of agriculture. The Minister yesterday mentioned it and he give us a rundown of what happened. He gives the impression that the New Democratic Party while in Government sit down and allowed agriculture to take the back burner, but forget to say that even though agriculture was a phenomenal in the Caribbean where all countries experienced that situation where agriculture contributed less and less to GDP. So it is not a St. Vincent thing but what we have from St. Vincent is that in our tourism take over to cover the revenue lost from agriculture in particular bananas to our efforts in tourism. And I felt so elated yesterday when I heard the Minister of Tourism, he was very happy in his presentation and it seemed to me that in tourism we are on our way up and I hope so, because to be honest with you, Mr. Speaker, it is the sector based on our exposure to the foreign media, the exposure they have given us that we see some hope and I am hoping that this could come a reality, because without a sector taking off and do so tremendously we are in dire straits.

Mr. Speaker, I when the Honourable Senator Brown was making his presentation, he made a very..., he made a comment and maybe we take it slightly, but I believe when he said, we cannot do agriculture..., it is the old fashioned way that is basically the point that he was making, we cannot do it the old fashioned way and I want to add that the focus of agriculture these days through the market oriented, internationally sound production of agriculture products, improved income and employment opportunities and nutrition security, poverty alleviation and I agree with the brother and repeat, it cannot continue the old way. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, that in St. Vincent and the Grenadines we have what it takes as people to charter agriculture in this direction. I notice in

the budget something called the “Venezuela Initiative” where it seems to me that a lot of efforts is being put into certain agricultural products to produce a bit of scale so that we could make some foreign exchange and we on this side have no problem with that and we encourage that kind of action by the Ministry of Agriculture and by the Government on a whole, because we cannot treat agriculture especially in St. Vincent with a rich history as a distance cousin. We cannot do that. We have to give agriculture the priority that it needs [applause] we must do that.

You know when you look around the Caribbean as a nation we are blessed. We are blessed big time you know with our resources in agriculture. We have competent farmers with a good work attitude and we have soil that could grow anything. I heard Mr. Daisley on radio say that we could grow a nail if we plant it and we get a crowbar [interjection] yes that is to tell you how we can..., and if an agriculturist tell you that, then you might tend to believe it. You know the point I am making, Mr. Speaker, we seem to be slighting agriculture you know and that point in terms of the importance of it was brought out by the Minister of Education and as a person come from the bread basket and she brings out that point vividly that agriculture is an important sector in country that we seemed to be neglecting.

Yes, when we talk about the efforts of the Ministry, we are noticing in terms of the resources put into agriculture and this year there has been slight declined from last year and having come off from a year that things went real bad for the farmers that we should have put a bit more effort into this sector. Mr. Speaker, in the Prime Minister address he said and I quote,

**“Despite the significant level of assistance and incentives granted to farmers by the Government, immense challenges remained to lift a diversified agricultural sector. In this regard, among the more important constraints generally is the lack of availability of credit facilities on softer terms, praedial larceny, and unavailability of sufficient labour which is adequately productive”.**

Mr. Speaker, last year in the Prime Minister presentation of the budget he said, as a measure to improving agriculture is that they were going to approach the Credit Unions so that a credit facility can be established for farmers, so that this I believe the intention was so that farmers can get loans on a softer rate because these days as I said we have to treat agriculture in a business fashion and hence why I said that we cannot do business as usual. But it appears as if this was just talk because nothing of that sort seemed to have happened. Maybe the Prime Minister could clarify me on that when he is wrapping up [interjection] yes, let me read the exact thing, it is on page 11 of last year’s presentation of the budget. He said, “Provision of credit to farmers working in conjunction with the Credit Union League through a micro credit facility.” That was a very important initiative, very important because as I mentioned before that the bulk of the farmers in this country are small farmers and over the years when we preached and we talk about the golden years of bananas and banana fields is the same small farmers who do the bulk of the work.

I was talking to my colleague earlier on and she was telling me that farmers were telling her that you know 20 years ago how things were so good, 15, 20 years, 25 years ago in agriculture and nowadays when we are exposed to technologies that could improve the sector we seem to be lagging you know, we seem to be lagging. We have the Chinese Technical Mission here and we are not seemed to be wanted to tap in to their expertise. The Honourable Terrance Ollivierre and I had the privilege of going to Taiwan and I remember one morning

were eating breakfast and we were given a slice of a very large fruit and we thought it was water melon from the way it looked, but when we taste, we say, no this is not water melon but the taste is very familiar, but we were bamboozled by the size of the slice. So we called the liaison officer, the interpreter and we say, what is this? He said, oh in your country they call that guava. Very big that it look like a slice of a giant guava. I was amazed at the size of it. You know and then we went, we had the privilege of going to some of the experiment farms where they do the experiments and so on in crops and what they were doing from some very small trees they were producing large fruits. We are saying that we could adopt or have them teach us the technique. I know they are doing some of it, but let us tap in it some more, yes, and let us do that so that we could have ways and means of improving the quality of agriculture and improving our revenue from agriculture. We need to do that [applause].

Mr. Speaker, it is a kind of sad when we look at our potential for agriculture that St. Vincent and the Grenadines rank among the countries of the region the highest food import bill. They are put in three batch one that import lead, I think Brazil is in that batch where I think they only import 15 percent, but they have another batch, but the batch that import the highest food, here comes among us are countries like Antigua and so on, they are like St. Vincent and the Grenadines and we are so rich in resources for agriculture. [Interjection] yes you know and as you mentioned that to eating local part of it we had to encourage and remember in the past there was this jingle on the radio telling you to buy local you know as if you know sometimes it make you as a consumer feel guilty if you want to buy a foreign product and we need to bring back things like this to educate our people so that they could know [applause] that you have to support local industry. They must support local businesses and these are some ideas that we have to as a people, we have to champion these ideas and the farmers will feel grateful for that because they know that even though the market out there might be a bit competitive, but right here in our country they could have good sale.

You know sometimes strange enough when you go into the market on a Saturday or Friday evening that a number of the people who you saw there buying stuff you know are people who are living in places like Chateaubelair you know come into Kingstown to buy stuff. You know I do sometimes marvel at that you know. I would say to them no, why you cannot get it down there and is like talking to farmers in the Chateaubelair area they would say, well why are you not producing? They would say..., and their thing is, well you know we have no money, bananas gone through and because you know everybody know one of the good thing about banana you know, you know every week something coming in no matter how small it is. With bananas on the rocks as it is today farmers are not making any money and it seems as though no incentives are given to them to go into other areas and we talk here everyday about how much we love agriculture and how much we want today to preserve the sector, but our action need to override our words.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have observed over the years in rural North Leeward that we are losing and I want to link this with the point the Prime Minister was making with regards to labour and the inefficiency or insufficient labour on the..., to work the farms. What we have noticed in rural St. Vincent a number of our young people are migrating in June, so sometimes the person who carry on the farming is not there, they are somewhere in Canada and when you watch Facebook there they are. Mr. Speaker, what I am saying, Mr. Speaker, is we have to find ways and means, you know as a people we are creative and sometimes we get out of some dilemma and at the end of it we smile and ask ourselves, boy how did we do that? We have the ability to sit down and

discuss ideas with the people who are so affected. Many a times you know we come to this Honourable House and we discuss problems affecting farmers without some of the farmers having any idea what is happening. One or two might be consulted, but if larger group of farmers are given the opportunity to have their say, we could come up with more ideas that we could arm..., yes I know we have farmers groups, but some of these groups need to be revised.

I know at one point they had an active farmers group in North Leeward, but they have branch off into pineapple and so on for they are trying to be more specialized these days. But the thing is we need to capture the imagination of our people. Even though you may not have gone to a university and sometimes I say that we trick into believe that only people who would have gone to UWI or other places have the brain to do something, but the persons who are on the ground they have the everyday experiences and we need to tap into that. Mr. Speaker, food security in St. Vincent and the Grenadines is a very serious matter, a very serious matter and we as an agricultural nation should not be in a position where if..., like what happened the other day when there were high food prices all over the world and we in SVG panicking in the Caribbean and in St. Vincent, we had a summit to deal with it, you could imagine that. That Caribbean had a summit to deal with high food prices about food that they could grow right here in the Caribbean. We need to get back to basics, Mr. Speaker, and address the problem and come up with meaningful solution to deal with them and the persons who are in the better position to give us a lot of these answers are the persons directly involved. Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege of going through the 2012 Estimates and apart from some problems with the typo I would not curse people about the presentation although some persons might see to do so, however, what I am concerned about you know is that some of the indicators are not related to the objectives so you do not know where to put what.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Member could..., in relation to the question...,

**HONOURABLE ROLAND MATTHEWS:** Yes. Okay Mr. Speaker, I am happy to see...,

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Just a minute, just a minute, what you want me to do allow him to flaunt the rules about debating the Estimates twice [interjection] with who, by you [interjection] no that is not so, that is not so [interjection] yes I will think so. That is why I..., all right go ahead Honourable Member.

**HONOURABLE ROLAND MATTHEWS:** Mr. Speaker, the Banana Service Unit is described by the Prime Minister in his budget presentation and about the fact that over \$3 million has been allocated for Black Sigatoka eradication at the ongoing process and I want to join with my Honourable Member, Honourable David Brown for saying that he hope that this thing work, because it is important, Mr. Speaker, that our people in the various Ministries, especially Agriculture as I am debating that, I am hoping that they are not subjected to certain description by their boss when things do not go well. I am hoping that the Ministry officials do a good job in ensuring that whenever the opportunity arise to spray that the banana would be sprayed on time with regularity so that we do not have a repeat of what has happened last year. Because I know a lot of effort and money has been spent in preparing the farms and we expect that this year things would show up or should be better as far as banana is concerned.

Mr. Speaker, I always like to say, Mr. Speaker, because I am from rural St. Vincent you know and coming from very poor background matters of this nature are very dear to me in the sense that I as I said in my open remark, I

am still looking of how this budget impact on the lives of the ordinary man and woman. I am still looking. I have been..., I looked at the first two words, “job creation” so I went in and looked under the topic of job creation, poverty reduction and job creation and what we see is a lot of words there you know in terms of this budget goes for economic growth from which springs the stimulus for poverty alleviation and employment. Forty percent of the capital budget of EC\$184.9 million has been allocated to economic affairs from which inevitably close\* jobs directly.

Earlier on we were told that we could not implement these because of problems and money could not be received. So therefore, how are we so sure that we are going to have any jobs created when we are admitting that because of the way things are harsh economically in the world that we have to tighten our belt. So we cannot guarantee, Mr. Speaker, that there are going to be any job creation and furthermore, when you look at where the revenue over \$100 million of the revenue is expected to come from other sources where the record has shown that other sources receive less than 5 percent of what it is suppose to get. So that is why I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that I am not seeing the hope for rural St. Vincent. When you go around places like North Leeward you are seeing a number of young people, young people you know on the street corner sitting down, using the opportunity to ask you for a small change to do something. I mean they are not..., sometimes they do it out of shame sometimes because they need it and maybe if they want to..., they may come and say, they may come easy I will ask you for a little..., give me a little change to buy so and so. But these young people if they are given the opportunity you know, Mr. Speaker, to work they will do so.

Many of them have gone into areas of “agriculture”and even the Prime Minister himself refuses to tackle it. He admits, he says, he will not deal with that, but where some of our young people are heading because they cannot get any job. Things are not happening for them so as a result they are heading into areas that they should not be heading. Mr. Speaker, in this Honourable House we have heard but I would considerably agree with the Honourable Opposition Leader, excuse, excuse, excuse for how things are so bad in this country. When I believe that we have the opportunity, we boast so much about our ability to work hard and I believe the Vincentian, the true Vincy, the hardcore Vincy is a hard worker. I believe that, but you can only work hard if you get the opportunity to do so and what this budget has done is not give us that opportunity.

There are many of us that have tried to make our own opportunity, but if the climate in the country is not good enough our opportunity might not get anywhere, our opportunity to create work for ourselves might not get anywhere because we are relying on people to buy, if we are providing a service and if the people in the country cannot get work to buy the stuff we are producing it does not make any sense. We are just going to open up and we are going to fall back down and hence the reason why some of the micro loans that were offered fall by the wayside and end up as bad debt because some of the ventures that were gone into did not really materialized, because no buyers.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to see in the budget the Prime Minister talked about assistance to non-banana farmers. Because I have made the call in this Honourable House to the question about this very fact, because during the passage of the hurricanes and the floods many of our non-banana farmers suffered tremendous damages to their crops and I am happy that they are being considered for some form of assistance based on what the Prime Minister said in his budget presentation. I know that people who plant their ground provision and their vegetables you know they are waiting with eagerness to get some assistance so that they could get their farms

going. You know and as I said you know, Mr. Speaker, that our people, our Vincentian people once they get an opportunity, once they get the chance or the little push they will accept it in great strides and do what is necessary to make ends meet. You know, we to be boasting and thing to say that we could spend our own dollar you know. We love that and once we get the little push to get us there we will gladly accept that.

Mr. Speaker, agriculture is labour intensive you know and may I mention you know, it has always been this way, but we cannot believe you know and I heard the Prime Minister say something Monday in his budget presentation, where he give the impression that because we come out of a colonial past as if we are running away from the farm and we do not want to do that kind of work. I do not believe that for once, Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that because the same people out there who are saying that things was much better years ago, they have been doing the same things. So how could we say now that because of our history of our fore parents working on plantations and so on is a disincentive for us to work the farms? I do not believe that for once! [Interjection] Mr. Speaker, you might be surprised at the kind of banks some people dig. We will talk I will tell you [laughter].

Mr. Speaker, fisheries that is very important, very important sector is fishing sector. I always say when I finish with the politics I want to buy a fishing boat, because having grew up with a grandfather who was an expert fisherman and many times he and I would have gone out to fish and so on and it is something I love. I have a passion for fishing, I have a passion for fishing man, I like the row boat style, you know, I have a passion for fishing. And today, Mr. Speaker, fishing is one of those subsectors that a lot of money is making. I have a neighbor, Mr. Speaker, sometimes he goes out on a Saturday alone you know, one Saturday and when things are good he would left in the morning maybe around 5 O'clock, by 10:00/11:00 he is back and he could sell up to \$400; \$500 less than half a day. Just to tell you how good, how lucrative the fishing business is.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** [Striking of the gavel]

**HONOURABLE ROLAND MATTHEWS:** I said sometimes you know and as a fisherman I know that and you would know that too that saying applies to everything in life. Mr. Speaker, fishing is a business that I believe that we as a people you know we have a lot of foreign trawlers in our waters, but in St. Vincent and the Grenadines we need to put our fisher folks..., you know I am seeing in the Estimates that I believe I heard the Prime Minister mentioned about fishermen, but we need to get our act together. Make sure our fishing facilities are up to standard that we could export fish [applause] you know. You know that in North America I met a guy from St. Vincent who sells fish up there, you know what he told me? He said, boy you know when I get fish from St. Vincent they sell off even before the crate reach in my yard. Sometimes in order..., because you know the name Vincy fish you know, when they hear it come from St. Vincent is like everybody want that as if it taste better than other fish. But he does not get it every week. Sometimes he try a thing on the customers, he get some from Grenada and say well they come from St. Vincent [laughter] you know. But the point is, Mr. Speaker, that goes to show that even in the metropolitan country that we have a niche and could capitalize on it. We should capitalize on it because things from St. Vincent and the Grenadines our vegetables, our ground provision our fish have a unique taste that the world over crave for that and we must...,

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** You have 10 minutes.

**HONOURABLE ROLAND MATTHEWS:** and must make sure that we capitalize on that, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have been privileged enough to have been elected to this Honourable House by the people of the North Leeward constituency and to them I always give God the glory and praise that they have me in their hearts and when I come to this Honourable House what I may talk about in North Leeward I do so proudly like every other MPs would do. Mr. Speaker, however, it has some things in the constituency I would like to highlight in this Honourable House and hope that some attention can be given.

Some time ago I came here, Mr. Speaker, and I asked about a road in Spring Village directly opposite the VINLEC power plant, I said, for lacking of the technical engineering and so on, I said, it was slipping that is how it looked to me. Today as I speak to you now the people of North Leeward cannot get gasoline. You know why? To put in their cars, the gas truck refused to pass on that road feeling because of how the side looks it might just break in. Now we have to do something about that as soon as possible. Our fisher folks have been affected as well as our motorists, because for safety reasons, the gas company refused to go into North Leeward to deliver gas at the gas station there. That is something that needs immediate attention.

**HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS:** I really think it is important that I say something here not to contradict you, but to agree with you. I happened to have had a visit from Ms. Thompson, the lady who runs the gas station and she complained of this. Since November they have not had gas in North Leeward, so I called Mr. Francis at Shell in fact, I spoke to Chief Engineer and to BRAGSA Brian George and both of them assured me that there is no danger in the area. There is some subsidizing what you call it there, settling of the road, we filled it already and it settled again, but it has not deteriorated over the last year and they have assured me that it is safe for their truck to travel there. Mr. Francis said to me that he has to bring an engineer from Barbados to check that first before he put the truck on it. So I tell him please as soon as your engineer has done the assessment please let me know. He has not gotten back to me as yet, but I have spoken to Ms. Thompson and told her that as far as the Ministry is concerned we will address the matter to refill the hole again because the back wall does not seemed to be collapsing, it seemed to be just subsidizing of the things. So I am aware of it and I am working on it and will follow it up for you.

**HONOURABLE ROLAND MATTHEWS:** Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. And I was of the same impression you know, but I did not know I had it so right [applause]. Because to be honest on the lower side I am not seeing anything that is threatening so I believe that the..., because other trucks are using it the same way, but as I say, once we could convince these people that there is no immediate danger and let us live in North Leeward like we are in modern times.

Mr. Speaker, the feeder roads in North Leeward as in other parts of the country are in a deplorable condition and yes there are a number of farmers who are interested in the cocoa planting, because they would have feel for themselves how cocoa is a lucrative thing on the international market and they want to get into it, but the areas where their farm lands are located it is a problem getting there and maybe some considerations as we are on the verge of embarking on this all important project, a bold side have embraced, even some people do it recently, but we have all embraced it and we are all trying to get our little backyard to plant cocoa, because we see where the money could be had. So I hope that some work can be done in areas that farmers are expected to capitalize on the cocoa market.

Sporting facility, I glad to hear my good friend this morning talk about the Cumberland Playing Field, again my Honourable Member, I know you do not have any problem with that [interjection] yes [laughter]. Mr. Speaker, I would very much like to see the Cumberland Playing Field come into fruition. It is important, over the years you have a lot of sportsmen and women from North Leeward and our facilities at Petit Bordel that has been over utilized and at this point in time it is loaded so much with grass and we could well do with the Cumberland Playing Field to kind of balance it. So as I am taking, I am taking the word of the Minister that work will be done so let us hope that after 10 years going into 11 that we could see some light at the end of the tunnel [applause].

I want to express my sincere gratitude as well for the work done in tourism sites in North Leeward in terms of Trinity Falls, Mr. Minister, on behalf of the people, thank you very much, because when the big buses comes down they could come right straight to the fall in Dark View and those who want to be more adventurous could go on to Trinity Falls if they wish to do and we are seeing a lot of tour buses coming back into North Leeward. Now as we mentioned the tour buses, I have made the call, Mr. Speaker, for Rose Bank and Rose Hall to be declared cultural places in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. My reason for that, one of the sweetest bum-drum anywhere is the Rose Bank bum-drum [applause] and nowadays, funerals in North Leeward is like a..., strange enough you know, is like a carnival [interjection] yes and they are all over the country and they are doing an excellent job in keeping the culture alive in North Leeward, those guys from Rose Bank.

The point I want to make when the tourists come in the bus to North Leeward they could stop there and that could be some ways of making money. Stop and listen to the guys for half an hour you know and persons could bring out little local produce to sell and we could do the same thing in Rose Hall because Rose Hall has a bum-drum as well and they are doing excellent work. They have craft and to the guys in these two communities I have to give them praise in this Honourable House for the work they are doing [applause] preserving culture in North Leeward [applause] Rose Bank and Rose Hall.

Rose Bank in particular has been doing well over the years in terms of its lighting up. Always a name to be reckoned with Rose Bank and they are doing an excellent job. However, they are still waiting on the completion of the hard court that was started sometime. It has been lighted election time so the light could go on, but after that nuttin aint happening so if we could get it going that the young people could come out and exercise and get their sports going that would be nice on the hard court. The lights are there but nothing else could be done because the surface is too rough and uneven for any ball game to be played.

In Chateaubelair, Chateaubelair as a town needs some form of upliftment you know. To me personally Chateaubelair look too rundown as a town, as a rural town where we have so much potential when it comes to tourism, it needs to be upgraded. Sometime ago, I think was last year or year before a tourist ship came to Chateau and the whole place just looked different and this is something, Mr. Minister, we could encourage. You know bring the..., make an arrangement for tourist boat to Chateau. We have the lovely landscape of the volcano and you know and what I want you to do too I would like you to sometimes when you have these consultations in the various constituencies, it would be good if you invite the representative from this side to have a say in determining the course [applause] of action for the various things you know. That is something that we will embrace because in doing so, we would have an all inclusive and we will be in for a little reconciliation, so Mr. Speaker, also in sports as I have said that we have been doing well. We went to

Barrouallie, Fitz Hughes team and won the Bagga championship and that is why the Honourable Minister did not want to say it yesterday eh.

A team from Fitz Hughes in North Leeward went to Barrouallie and champion at Barrouallie football. I want to congratulate as well the Petit Bordel football team for winning the North Leeward competition and I also want to commend the guys from the North Leeward Sport Association for doing an excellent job over the years to organize sporting activities in North Leeward. So to the guys, to Jules Anthony and company my greatest appreciation to you, they have been doing an excellent job in making sure sporting activities are alive and well North Leeward.

Our schools some of them need a little repair here and there with the usual things. But I know with an able bodied Minister who..., well you saw what I am talking about, there are some little things here and there that needs to be addressed. Also, Mr. Minister of Works, the situation with the German Gutter and the English Gutter in Troumaca still threatening to households and as you promised you would look into the possibility of relocating and we hope that this year will see some action done in that regard. Mr. Speaker, it has been indeed a pleasure. So once again I address this House on behalf of the people, the beautiful people of the Northern Constituency of North Leeward. I am much obliged [applause].

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** You are indeed a great economic. You ended on the exact [laughter] time. Honourable Member for the Southern Grenadines!

**HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE:** Mr. Speaker, as I rise to make my contribution to this budgetary debate, I do so in all humility thanking God for the opportunity that he has granted me to represent the people of the Southern Grenadines. On entering politics and this Honourable House I always take pride that in all my deliberation to give credence to the title that I bear. After all we are all Honourable men and women and I always take the pride in my conduct that it is reflective of that and in doing so Mr. Speaker, I continue in the vein as my Honourable colleague that is the Member for the Northern Grenadines, the Dr. the Honourable Godwin Friday in his quotation from Charles Dickens book "hard time" to let facts be the hallmark of my presentation today. I will be dealing primarily with two portfolios that I shadow that is Education and Health and the Environment along with constituency matters and I hope that the 45 minutes that have been granted to me will be sufficient to do so and my Honourable colleague, the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown has told me that I would be afforded 58 minutes [laughter].

Mr. Speaker, every successive generations seeks new opportunity to change the course of this social and economic environment to bring into focus more equitable sustained and plan strategies to improve the life of all its citizens. There is no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that this is the direction that all Vincentian holds in the pursuit of achieving quality education undoubtedly it would include improved access relevance and also training to prepare all our citizens for the world of work. The Honourable Prime Minister in his budgetary address spoke of the achievement of his Government in the field of education.

Mr. Speaker, I wish he had spoken about education in the same vein in which he has spoken about health and I will quote on page 47 of his address which states;

**“Indeed, part of my government’s solemn responsibility has been to build further, stronger and swiftly upon relatively sound public health foundations laid by previous Labour and NDP administrations”**

And Mr. Speaker, I hasten to add that the achievements in education would not have been possible if the New Democratic Party had not laid a strong foundation and made significant strides in all facets of our education system from early childhood to primary, secondary and post secondary education. And Mr. Speaker, let me put everything in prospective. I want to read from pelican, a UWI magazine of the University of the West Indies and to quote an article entitled “Secondary Education a knife edge and the future of Tertiary Education” and it was written by Dr. Didacus Jules, he is the Registrar and Chief Executive Officer of the Caribbean Examination Council. And this is what he states;

“Over the past 20 years, great progress was made in the provision of access to secondary education.” He went on to state, “The statistics point to the strong political will exercised since the 1980s to significantly increase gross secondary enrollment,” and what he pointed out is that among the dramatic movers during that period you had St. Vincent and the Grenadines moving from 37 percent in the 80s up to 82 percent by the year 2000 [applause]. This has proven, Mr. Speaker, that in no doubt during that period of the New Democratic Party they were working to ensure that you had improved intake at all levels including secondary schools and much of the movement in regards to intake to secondary education happened under the New Democratic Party Mr. Speaker.

And Mr. Speaker, this did not stop there because what transpired from since 1988 as the Prime Minister also said on page 38 when he stated that there were increase in teacher education and that it had grown, it had advanced in leaps and bounds and let me put that again into perspective, Mr. Speaker. For in 1988 lecturers from the St. Vincent Teachers College were given the mandate to visit all parts of St. Vincent and the Grenadines on a teacher recruitment drive, because the then NDP Government recognised that with increased intake at all levels of the education system that you must have the quality and the amount of teachers to back up what they were doing, Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Speaker, during that period what happened is that in the late ‘80s to early ‘90s you had that the intake of teachers at the Teachers College more than double. But, Mr. Speaker, that did not stop there and they went on to ensure that even after Vincentians take up the opportunity to improve themselves that they did not stop at a college education, but they went on to ensure that the economic cost for all Vincentians who wanted to go the University of the West Indies [applause] was paid and that was not done before and it is during that period that many Vincentians recognised that a university education was attainable and many took up the opportunity and went to the University of the West Indies, many of them have returned and are making significant contributions to the development of St. Vincent and the Grenadines [applause].

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that there has been an increase in the intake at all campuses of the University of the West Indies, great intake under the New Democratic Party because of the policy of ensuring that even poor Vincentians had the opportunity to enter a university in the University of the West Indies. And Mr. Speaker I had an experience one day in a class, I think it is a History class, Patel and I were in that same class and there was a lecturer, a young lecturer because she had gone through her First Degree, her Masters and was doing her Doctorate and she was lecturing, her name is Ms. Sheeda Hussein and she asked the question. When I was a student here in some classes you had one or two Vincentians, others none, now I am in a class and I am calling the roles and we are discussing, we are talking and there are 8, 9, 10 Vincentians, what is the cause for that and

my answers, I was only speaking about one particular class, and my answer to her it is because of the policies of the New Democratic Party that many Vincentians are now taking the opportunity to enter university [applause].

Mr. Speaker, it did not stop there because being a student at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus thought me some things very important. It is that the NDP Government, they were building for the future and I take the opportunity to show you why they were investing; they recognise that they have to invest in young people in order to build a brighter and better St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Mr. Speaker, I remembered the first day I entered the classroom for the programme which I was studying for and while there a number of other students came in, mature people and they were asking, they asked me, "Are you sure that you are in the right class?" And I said, "Yes." The class went on, it was early the lecturers came and they started to explain what the course is all about and things like that and some of them when they looked down they stopped, and they asked the question again. Even the lecturers asked, are you sure you are in the right place. Because then I probably looked was much smaller and younger and everything and they wanted to know whether I am in the right programme, because I used the word mature before and I notice one of my Honourable Members on the other side asked the question and yes, because they were older people and when I said that the lecturer said, "well here it is that you have St. Vincent and the Grenadines are sending young people to this programme that means that they are looking towards the future and building their education system and that."

What happened the next year of the programme, the majority of the people who entered the programme from Trinidad and Tobago they were mainly young people. Because you see, what they were doing the teachers there were benefiting from a programme that was being paid by the Canadian Government in which they gained their Degree while still at school, spending part of the time at school and the other part are in the classroom. I think it was a ratio of 3:2 on a working day and you also attend the university on a Saturday, Mr. Speaker. So it proves that even during that time, the New Democratic Party recognised that in order to take our country forward, investment must be made in our young people [applause].

And Mr. Speaker, when it came to my thesis, a number of the students were asking, I wonder which school in Trinidad they were going to send you to do it, but I had different ideas. So I went to the person who was in charge of education and I said, "all of the students from Trinidad are doing their thesis in a school in Trinidad and I think it is only fair that I should do mine in a school in St. Vincent and the Grenadines." And she said to me, "Yes, because if you are here on behalf of the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, then it is only fair that whatever you decide to study should benefit the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines." And she said, "We will find a way." And Mr. Speaker, linkages were being form since that time, because in 2000 my thesis were done at the Canouan Government School, you had two lecturers from the University spending two to three weeks on that island assessing what was being done, Mr. Speaker. So linkages were being formed from since that time in the development [applause] of our education system, Mr. Speaker.

And on entering this Honourable House, given the responsibility of education by the Honourable Leader I then had a discussion with him and said, "we need to do something to ensure that more Vincentians avail themselves of the opportunity to gain a Degree at home," because if this could happen where lecturers visited Canouan Island for two to three weeks, one was there for two weeks that other one for three, then it is possible for Vincentians to gain their Degree at home and the recommendation was made in this Honourable House from

this side of the House that teacher education and others can be improved for the betterment of our education system [applause] and that initiative came from this side of the House, Mr. Speaker [applause].

Mr. Speaker, I was elated, Mr. Speaker, when the suggestion was taken and implemented and I should say, not only taken and implemented but it was improved upon as any responsible Government is expected to do [applause]. It was taken and it was improved upon. Just as how you tap the desk for that fact, you should tap the desk for all the others that you know [applause]. Mr. Speaker, but I hastened to point out you know something significant happened during that time is that while studying there, the Honourable Member for North Leeward would also bear this with me that you had a general election in St. Vincent.

But you know what? Some of the persons in the programme, I think it was at least three of them who were in the same teachers programme studying management, they were candidates for two of the parties running. But you know what was significant? They did not have to resign from the programme, they did not leave the programme, they were still going to school and even if they ran for the election, they did not have to resign. They did not have to resign and those who won were just elevated to a higher level. This is why I was so glad when I heard about the agreement that was signed between the Teachers Union and the Government and I am hoping that the same thing could hold for St. Vincent and the Grenadines and that the three teachers can be reinstated [applause] and gainfully employed. Because, Mr. Speaker, it does not look good on us and the precedent that we are setting, Mr. Speaker [applause] it does not look good and something must be done. But I want to hasten to add that even while the teachers from St. Vincent and the Grenadines, even after they gained their Degree it is the Opposition who had once again to take the issue to bring the issue to this House and fight and fight for those teachers to be appointed as graduate. Where I did so during my budgetary address and the Hansard will prove that the different questions that were asked in relation to the appointment of these teachers as graduated, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I heard the Honourable Senator talking about, and the Deputy Speaker speaking about the Book Loan Scheme and the fact that \$1 million has been introduced in order to improve it. But Mr. Speaker, over the past two years, we on this side of the House have been lamenting the fact that what was put there was not enough and we have been highlighting the various problems that were faced by students throughout St. Vincent and the Grenadines and have been calling for more money to be placed into the Book Loan Scheme [applause]. Because on occasions some people would have paid the fee and would have only gotten two and three books and their parents would have had to find the money to pay for the rest, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, parents do have responsibility, parents do have responsibility and later in the budget debate, I will show you..., as a matter of fact, I will go to it now. Mr. Speaker, because in the Southern Grenadines you know sometimes when you talk about issues and you talk about education in the Grenadines and sometimes you speak about it so passionately and people cannot understand you know why? Because sometimes you are far removed from the problem and if you live in the Grenadines you would be able to more understand and appreciate what the people are talking about and I am so glad for the Honourable Senator Baptiste. And during her programme serving the people which give the people of Canouan the opportunity to talk about their problems that they are facing in the quest to obtain secondary education for their children, but before I reach to that, Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate and commend the people of Mayreau, because they too have been facing similar problems

in terms of, yes, you are given a place at a secondary school in Union Island, Bequia or Main Land, St. Vincent, but the numerous problems that comes with it.

Sometimes you are there, I know parents..., I am faced with it on a regular basis. Sometimes you get the phone call; Mr. Ollivierre my child is home. I did not know he was coming or she was coming, but you get the phone call and they are there and they call me, what can you do to assist? I know about talking on several talk shows and they are people who have been calling and offering their homes, say we can assist, we can help, but today for the people of Mayreau, for the children who are attending Union Island Secondary School they have gotten together and they have said no more of it. We are taking the matter in..., they contacted private owner..., and what has been happening from since the first week of school is that 13 students from Mayreau who are students at the Union Island Secondary School now travel from Mayreau, they leave Mayreau 7 O'clock in the morning, the boat picks them up at 4:00 or 4:30 and they return to Mayreau.

All I am asking is that some assistance be given to ferry in the payment of the transportation cost so that it will make it a little easier for them and I applaud the people of Mayreau for taking that initiative. Honourable Minister, I know you had invited me and I made the statement of saying that in Canouan, I do not want to go through again because we all know it and I really and truly to..., because education all our business and we all must get involved in order to help solve the problems of this country. It is not only those on the Government side have solutions and can do it, everyone of us must put an input [applause] to make sure that things work in favour for [interjection] thank you well I am coming, I am coming, I am coming, I will be there, I am coming [laughter].

Mr. Speaker that one almost choked me so [laughter] I hope there was a pause at that point. Mr. Speaker, on Christmas Eve I was travelling on the M. V. Baracuda heading home and there was some youths on the boat from Canouan and they brought up the issue of secondary education, but you know what one of them said keep lingering on my mind. He is a sailor, he is a young man, he is not even 30 as yet, but he say it and he said to me, "Mr. Ollivierre I have a reading problem, I never got an opportunity to go to a secondary school." He said, "In order to sail I have to get seaman's certificate and because of his reading problem it was very difficult for him", so we have young people out there who want to be gainfully employed and do something to help themselves and they do recognize that they have problems, but in regards to people in the Grenadines, if the institution is not there, how can we expect them to help themselves? Because leaving home coming to the mainland for some of them it is a problem.

Mr. Speaker, when we mentioned some of these things in this House some people sometimes believe as if you are making up these situation, but I know some of the Honourable Members on the other side of the House would have spent some years in the Grenadines and can attest to some of the problems that the people there go through. Mr. Speaker, I was so saddened when I listened to the budget, because we have been talking and talking and the parents from Canouan have been making pleads, and pleads and pleads, and calling that something must be done in the area of access in regards to secondary education. Because of the social problems, the financial burdens that they bear and I really thought that it would have been addressed in this year's presentation, Mr. Speaker. I really that it would have been addressed because when you listen, when sometimes you read the newspapers and there are articles there of people talking and complaining about what is happening and it is really time, please that the problems be addressed.

We are talking about a university graduate in every home by 2020. For some of these families is the first opportunity some of them have someone going to secondary school and if they drop out, then how can we achieve that goal by the year 2020? And that is all I am talking about. We need to really sit down and iron out and come up with a solution. Because it is really a vexing problem and as I said, I am saddened and I am sure the people of Canouan are also saddened that they have not heard anything concerning what they have asked about and the plight that they face. I am sure if you all saw that programme, “serving the people” that you would understand what the people are saying. Even for this term, the beginning of this term two of them are home and I am saying if it is one that is plenty. We have to find a way of levelling the playing field and what that means you know, it means sometimes giving more to the less fortunate so that they can get that opportunity to make something good of themselves. It sometimes hurts me when I go through the constituency and when I listen to..., or the Member of West Kingstown yesterday and then I listened to the Member of North Leeward and I heard them talking about the young people who are there at the side of the street just liming and I know sometimes some of these young people in the Grenadines they get themselves in trouble because what? They do not have the skills.

They have the tourism sector down there, but sometimes they go and get themselves in trouble because they do not have the skills to get employment. They have not finished secondary school and we all know that in today’s world everybody must be given the opportunity to finish secondary school [applause] because once you do that the competencies that they learn will prepare them for the job market and also to advance themselves if they want to do so and every citizen throughout every nook and cranny of this country should be given that opportunity and that is why I speak so passionately when it comes to the Grenadines, because I went to Canouan Government School and even at that time, sometimes for some of us entering a secondary school was a dream and I am glad I have gotten that opportunity and if we are talking about an Education Revolution and increased access and more opportunities to our people and giving them wings to fly as eagle, then everybody throughout the country [applause] must be given the same opportunity and I am making the plea once more for the people in Canouan in the secondary.

Mr. Speaker, we also have a problem, we have increased access yes, but there is no doubt that we are having dropouts along the way. And Mr. Speaker, something must be done. Despite the increased access we are having dropouts. Mr. Speaker, how can we as the Honourable Prime Minister said, lifting the Education Revolution to the next level if we are having a number of dropouts along the way. Mr. Speaker, something must be done to see, what the problem is and what we can do to curb the problem. Something must be done, well even if it is truancy then we must have a solution because here what is the problem, Mr. Speaker, that dropout, that person if they had given the opportunity to go on may have been that person in that family to be there to motivate the others behind, to say, if I can do it you can do it and if I can reach university then you have to reach the university thereby achieving our goal a university graduate in every home by 2020 and we are not seeing that [applause] because if that dropout, that person who drop out because of different reasons if they had might be just the motivational factor that somebody else needs in order to champion the cause of secondary education and moving beyond that point, Mr. Speaker. That is all I am saying.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, but even though we have had improvements in the education system we still have some problems that needs to be fixed. I am not saying you do not have problems, I am saying we do have some

problems, but some of these problems, Mr. Speaker, can be easily solved and can be avoided. For example, Mr. Speaker, at the Mary Hutchinson Primary School, the Government School the first week of this term the students are home and why? When you look at water problems, washroom problems, the floor to the room where the infants are held, the classroom for the infants, the flooring is not good at all. Some of these things could have been solved during the vacation. Some of these things could have been solved during the vacation, so there was no need for instructional time to be lost. Some of these problems could have been easily solved. Example we had problems at the Canouan Government School, work was done, contract was offered to some people, but the way they did the work, it was not satisfactory and the parents were complaining, complaining, complaining but then in step CCA, the problems were solved. We have problems at the Union Island Secondary School. Electrical problems, they also told me that they have no water. When they open the tank..., I mean it is a new school, you open the two tanks and they are empty. What is the problem? And in the height of the rainy season, what is the problem? Nobody checking these things to see what is going on. The little maintenance problems all these kinds of things, nobody checking these things so the children have to be home last school term, lose two days and all these sorts of things. There are problems; some of them can be easily solved.

Playing Fields, the school have been affected. If you do not believe me check the information, [interjection] I am telling you if you do not believe me..., there have to get a private contractor with a water tank to carry water to the school.

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

**HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE:** Mr. Speaker, a playing field, the area is being affected, Mr. Speaker, school sports development, sporting development is being affected because you do not have a proper playing field in Union Island. I heard the Honourable Minister for sports was lamenting the fact that he went to the Carriacou and he took me to Carriacou but what is interesting in taking me to Carriacou, Mr. Speaker, I reached there before him [laughter] I reached there before him, Mr. Speaker. [Interjection] no, your information you met me there the day but I was there days before, Mr. Speaker, but what I want to point out to the Minister, it is good that we are having that sport, that event, but what I want to say to you when will Union Island be able to host a game? And you know why, you know why, because we do not have a playing field that is big enough and one that is proper. So now what do we expect to do, go to Carriacou every year? [Interjection] Well when you put the secondary school in Canouan then we will go to Canouan. Carriacou will come up, Union will come up and everybody will go to Canouan when the secondary school is built in Canouan [applause] thank you very much, thank you. So we are looking forward to hosting the event in Canouan very soon.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate, I must congratulate the principal, staff, students and parents for the outstanding performance of the Union Island Secondary School [applause] at the CSEC Examination. Mr. Speaker, for the second consecutive year they have done well. They have been improving and improving and improving, because Girls High School one, Grammar School two, St. Joseph Convent and Kingstown and Marriaqua High, the next school in line is the Union Island Secondary School [applause] with pass rate of approximately 80 percent [applause]. Mr. Speaker, these prove our people they are hungry for education, put the school in Canouan and you will also see great improvement [applause] and achievement by our people. Just put it there and I want to highlight to you English B 100 percent [applause] English A which some schools are

fighting to pass 50 we reached a record 96 percent [applause] Mr. Speaker, at the Union Island Secondary School.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Striking the gavel. Honourable Members, Honourable Members, Honourable Members, while I appreciate what is going on we also have to take into consideration, and I am addressing both sides two that the Stenographers usually have difficulty at this particular time recording and also taking their notes, they indicated that to me, so while we do applaud let us take that into consideration and I am saying this because I have had a situation where a Member of this House objected to the word inaudible. You remember that quite clearly and if they do not hear what you say, they will just put the word “inaudible”, so let us..., okay.

**HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE:** Mr. Speaker, the results is not only endowed to the education of the students, but I must also as I said, compliment the teachers. Some of them way and beyond the call of students, some had classes on Saturdays while others had classes on Sundays, sometimes into late hours of the evening, because I remember on such occasion one parent came to me and complained, Mr. Ollivierre, my granddaughter came from school nine O'clock, she said she was down by the school and I say, do not worry, I will investigate and Mr. Speaker, the next weekend, I went down to the school, Mr. Speaker, with a police because I walked with the police, I said, let us go, because if it is anything then you must know. And Mr. Speaker, when I reached at the school, the children were in the classroom hardly engaged, when I say hardly, they were working hard with their teachers and we must commend the teachers for taking such a stand and for working with the children [applause].

Mr. Speaker, some of the teachers have left for reasons which I do not want to get into now, but I will discuss those with the Minister. Because when you have teachers who are working hard, you need to make those teachers feel welcome and comfortable, because the results of the school shows that whatever was being said, should be thrown aside and to know that the teachers were working very hard and it reached to the point where some got frustrated and have to leave and that should never happen at any point of our education system, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I had attended some consultations with people from the Ministry who came down in order to see what skills can be taught to young people. They were different stakeholders, business people and everything. I know that they are working on a skills centre, it should be finished soon. I hope that some of the skills that were identified would be taught and our young people would get the opportunity to make better of themselves, Mr. Speaker. I hope that when the time comes that they would be certified along the CARICOM guidelines in terms of the CVQs and also that is the (Caribbean Vocational Qualification) and also the National Vocational Qualification Certificates will be offered there.

Mr. Speaker, we are saying that..., I heard it was announced that St. Vincent was the number four destination in the Caribbean, was it number four? But Mr. Speaker, we are also mindful that tourism plays a vital part of our economy and if we really truly want to make it that, Mr. Speaker, we must recognise that the construction of the hospital and maritime training institute is long overdue and see that it is in the budget and I hope that in the near future that we will be able to help our Vincentian along the line in which we say we are developing nationally.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, I shadow health and education, constituency matters is a herculean tasks, but I also want to say it to Vincentians out there, yes we on this side do support the one laptop initiative, because I believe it was the Honourable Leader of the Opposition who first made that announcement and he was laughed to scorn on certain radio station, but we long to see the day that it was implemented and we are also for it and I am urging all Vincentians to check the website [www.vincyclassroom.com](http://www.vincyclassroom.com). You have study tips, fun games and all these things; we are talking about critical part of our education, and are to develop critical thinking. So once you go there, there are things there that will help in the development of critical thinking. Sometimes you pass by the roadside and you see the young people they are there at all different places, you do not know what they are doing, but if we give them the information where they can go and download positive things and do positive things with the laptop, then we will have a better St. Vincent and the Grenadines [applause] [www.vincyclassroom.com](http://www.vincyclassroom.com) [applause] past papers. We also have classes will be done for CXC Maths, Common Entrance and all of that, get on line, interact face to face with a lecturer and see what you can learn. St. Vincent and the Grenadines depends on you Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the Minister of Tourism and also to the Minister of Culture, we have many different festivals in the Grenadines. We have Easter Val, Canouan Regatta, Mayreau Regatta, Canouan Carnival, May Day Festivities, we need to give a little finance for them, plug them in. I know the Honourable Minister of Tourism he was at Mayreau during the last Regatta, he enjoyed himself immensely, I hope to see him there again in order to support the Mayreau committee. We want more financing and support [interjection] no nobody would not do you anything, we are friendly people in the Grenadines and we welcome all. As a matter of fact, the more come, the better, let us come and have a taste of what the Grenadines is all about.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** I will give you three generously. The time is up; I will give you three generously.

**HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE:** You will give me three generously?

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Yes.

**HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, [laughter]. Mr. Speaker, in the area of health, one of the result indicator stated that the conduct of a patient satisfactory survey in community health it was not done in 2011 it is slated in the 2012 Estimates, I hope that it is done, because, Mr. Speaker, it will inform us as to what the people want, the problems they are facing and what we can do to better provide for them. So I really hope that this is one of the main objectives that is worked on. Because when we listen to outcry of the people throughout St. Vincent and the Grenadines, like others used to say that there is an old saying “three Frenchmen cannot be wrong”, so [laughter] there are so many people talking about some of the problems they are facing in order to get better health care, Mr. Speaker, we must do something about that.

The generator for the Union Island Health Centre, it was purchased, we still do not know where it is, it need to be hooked up, connection between the Canouan Health Centre and the Police Station, the generator is already hooked up at the Police Station, it is just a short distance, we can get that cover. Some work need to be done at the Mayreau clinic, you have little maintenance problems that need to work there and other things.

Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for the time that you have given me [applause]. I have many more things on my constituency to say, but Mr. Speaker, I will try to cover them in whatever way I can. Thank you very much sir.

**HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE:** I recognised the Member for Central Kingstown, but it has been indicated to me that I will close at this time, so he will come first thing in the morning.

**HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL:** Mr. Speaker, I do so move that we suspend until 9 O'clock in the morning.

**Question put and agreed to.  
House suspended at 8:15 p.m.  
Until Friday 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2012  
at 9:00 a. m.**