

**No. 8**

**Tuesday**

**Second Session**

**26<sup>th</sup> March, 2012**

**Ninth Parliament**

**SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES**

**THE**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

**(HANSARD)**

**ADVANCE COPY**

**OFFICIAL REPORT**

**CONTENTS**

**Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2012**

Prayers	6
Announcements	6
Obituaries	6
Congratulatory Remarks	14
Confirmation of Minutes	18
Announcements by the Speaker	18
Statement by Ministers	18
Reports from Select Committee	23
Questions for Oral Answers	23
Resolution	82



**THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

**OFFICIAL REPORT**

**PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE THIRD 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.**

**EIGHTH SITTING**

**26<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2012**

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

The Honourable House of Assembly met at 10:10 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  
Minister of Agriculture, Forestry

Member for East St. George

and Fisheries and Rural Transformation  
Honourable Montgomery Daniel

Member for North Windward

Minister of Tourism and Industry  
Honourable Saboto Caesar

Member for South Central Windward

Minister of Health, Wellness and  
The Environment  
Honourable Cecil McKie

Member for West St. George

Minister of National Reconciliation  
Labour, Information and Ecclesiastical Affairs  
Honourable Maxwell Charles

Member for Central Leeward

Minister of National Mobilisation,  
Social Development, the Family,  
Persons with Disabilities, Youths,  
Sports and Culture  
Honourable Frederick Stephenson

Member for South Windward

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade  
And Consumer Affairs  
Honourable Dr. Douglas Slater

Government Senator

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

Government Senator

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

Government Senator

Honourable David Browne

Government Senator/ Deputy Speaker

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

Honourable Arnhim Eustace  
Leader of the Opposition

Member for East Kingstown

Dr. the Honourable Godwin Friday

Member for Northern Grenadines

Honourable Terrance Ollivierre

Member for Southern Grenadines

Honourable St. Claire Leacock

Member for Central Kingstown

Honourable Daniel Cummings

Member for West Kingstown

Honourable Roland Matthews

Member for North Leeward

Honourable Nigel Stephenson

Member for South Leeward

Honourable Vynnette Frederick

Opposition Senator

**ABSENT**

Honourable Anesia Baptiste

Opposition Senator

# SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

MONDAY 26<sup>th</sup> MARCH, 2012

### PRAYERS

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Speaker reads the prayer of the House.

### ANNOUNCEMENT

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** We would recognise that we have someone acting as Sergeant of Arms because our regular Sergeant of Arms is not well. He was involved in an accident and some other person is acting now. As well as, Senator Baptiste has informed me that she would not be at this meeting because she is out of state.

### OBITUARIES

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Senator Francis, [someone assist him with a mike please].

**HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS:** Mr. Speaker, between yesterday and last night there were two very close friends and outstanding citizens of St Vincent and the Grenadines who passed away. I know other Members would speak about former Senator Shallow, and I also extend condolences but I want to say and acknowledge the passing of Dennis Da Silva and Creech Wood. Creech I think died in a motorcycle accident on Sunday morning, very close friend for many years. His younger brother Vin and I went to Grammar School together with the Honourable Representative for Central Kingstown and Creech was basically who we look forward to. He made quite a name for himself in the business world having operated a shipping firm out of the USA and then relocated to St Vincent. I know also his other brother Junior who was one form ahead of us in Grammar School and I want to extend sincerest condolences to the Wood family and we will see you to speak very soon.

Also last night on my way home, my brother called to say, "Das has passed". Das Da Silva was an outstanding businessman in St Vincent coming from the countryside and at one time he was one of the leading businessmen in Kingstown. He retired some years ago from active business and work; but his sons Ro and Ken along with Denise his daughter continued and today the Mountain Top Water and the Congo Valley Resort & Development and the Coconut Water Bottling Plant, which is still experiencing some difficulties technically... but he has left a significant mark on the business landscape of St Vincent and the Grenadines. A very outstanding son of the soil, very committed supporter of the former St Vincent and the Grenadines Labour Party for years and continued to give his support up until his time of passing. In fact, we were very pleased last year when we held

our convention at Mespo that he found time, despite he was going through some ailing times, to visit us at our convention. I extend on behalf of my family, the extended Francis, Gonsalves, Da Silva and De Freitas family sincerest condolences to his children, his widow and all the other members of that family. Thank you.

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

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to express condolences to the family and friends of distinguished citizens who have gone to the great beyond in recent times certainly subsequent to our last meeting of this Honourable House. First Mrs. Lucy Cato the widow of the late founding father of the nation, late Robert Milton Cato, passed away a few days ago and I have been advised that she would be buried on Wednesday at Calliaqua Anglican Church. And I expect that a number of parliamentarians and their spouses would be in attendance to show the tremendous respect and high regard which we have for the life and work of Lucy Cato.

She was a very devoted wife and companion; very often persons who are not involved in politics at the level at which we are involved do not appreciate the tremendous role played by spouses and the support they have to give; and in the case of Lucy Cato she provided that with grace and dignity. She was very much loved in this country, a woman of charm, devout Christian with the interest of the welfare of the poor and the marginalised. This House had seen it fit to pass a Bill to provide some support to her in her later years and that was the recognition in a material sense, but beyond that she lives in our hearts and in our minds.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to express condolences too to the family of my friend Dennis ‘Das’ Da Silva and join the Honourable Minister of Transport and Works in his comments. Dennis ‘Das’ Da Silva was my family. I lived free of cost during my A’ level years between 1964 and 1965 at his residence; it was then at Middle Street where the property which the Reddock’s now owned, which was owned immediately after by ‘Das’ Da Silva by I believe the lady popularly known as Monica. It was then a wall building at the bottom and a wooden building: wooden top, the top was the residence and I got to know Das even better than before.

Those days I recalled he had gotten ... full of energy, he had gotten the agency for Old Oak Rum and I would traverse the country with him often after school, I myself not imbibing Old Oak was playing domino while Old Oak and Pepsi was consumed by those who had gathered to Das’s caravan. He is generous beyond belief; he looked after so many persons in this country, particularly from the area from which he hailed in North Central Windward. He was one of those persons who were behind Vincent Beache and Ralph Gonsalves to forget their rivalries in North Central and come together.

He was a very strong supporter of the Unity Labour Party, he was an extremely successful businessman, hardworking and he branched off into a number of areas other than trading, we saw with his sons they went into the manufacturing enterprise of bottled water within Congo Valley. It is only on Thursday that I spoke that Ken his son came to my office and we were talking and he said, “You know, you should go and see Das, he is looking a little weak”; so I said, “I am going to see him this week”, and that is how things happened I did not get to see him the last few days before his death. I spoke to his widow Carmen this morning and offered my sympathy and that of my family and I had indicated that I would pay a short tribute to him today in the House, which is now what I am doing.

Das Da Silva was an ace man at draughts; a lot of people do not know this. In fact, two of the better draughts players I came up under were Das and a chap they called *poor feller*. *Poor feller* is the important man from the 1930's uprising who gave evidence on behalf of Mc Intosh at the preliminary enquiry for the treason/felony trial, for a feller known as Donald Romeo. Those are some of the historical figures whom in those days that I played draughts and dominos with bareback and in short pants outside of the business place on evenings and weekends and with the fisher folk, working people of the city, the stevedores and the like. These were friends of Das Da Silva. I am sure that we will all join here in these expressions of sympathy. He was a good man, a man who has made an immense contribution and this country is much better for Das Da Silva having lived among us.

I also, Mr. Speaker, would like to express condolences to the widow and children, family and friends of Carl Glasgow. On Tuesday evening around 5:00 clock when I was at cricket I got a message from his daughter that his wife said that Carl was asking to see me; and that he was looking very frail. I went to see him early the next morning, Wednesday morning after the cricket game; we spoke and I told him of my love for him and his contribution. We discussed other matters but I had formed the impression when I saw him when tears welled up in his eyes I did not think that Carl was going to last much longer. In fact, the family asked me if we can have the drip set up in his residence in his room; and I immediately as I arrived the morning, I got the Honourable Minister of Health who made the arrangements and by the time he made the arrangements he informed me that he had been taken to the hospital. Sadly, he died the next morning early on Thursday and his funeral is on Friday. There is a sitting in the High Court tomorrow morning and he will be churched in Kingstown but he will be buried in Georgetown.

Carl Glasgow was an outstanding athlete at school during the '60's. I remembered athletes of note, and those which jumped out at me in the same grouping would be Mike Findlay, Bonnie Baptiste the sprinter and footballer, and Carl Glasgow. Carl Glasgow had a high jump record for about 40 years: class one high jump record 6.5, 6.5½; (I am being corrected). He kept goal for the Grammar School in the Division 1 Championship when Grammar School was in Division 1 Football, what you now call the Premier Division and he was an all rounder attacking left hand batsman and spin bowler who played for the Windward Islands, not just for the Grammar School and St Vincent; he also played for the Windward Islands. He was a cricket administrator and later on we played together for the lawyer's team. I had to comment to him half jokingly when I saw him on Wednesday morning, and I said to him, "You know Carl, the world is so unfair, I should be on the bed because I eat whatever I want to eat, I do whatever I want to do, I did not take care to exercise the way you did". But this is how life is sometimes, of course his wife who is very fit, she said to me then: "Well, it is his fitness why he has been able to battle this ailment for such a long period of time.

Carl Glasgow was very interested in national affairs, he was interested in politics, he was the Deputy Chairman at one time of the Unity Labour Party and before that for a brief while he was one of the founders of the St Vincent and the Grenadines National Congress. He had a lot of friendship throughout this country and in Georgetown he did a lot of work down at Browns Town with the young men; the playing field which is there. Carl was a very good lawyer and solicitor. He wrote in defense of the international airport and supported the airport up to his last moment. I am really going to miss him, he has left a wonderful wife widowed and two beautiful daughters and I know the extended family here and in Trinidad would be very, very sad at his passing. The cricket administrator: a wonderful human being.

I know that the Honourable Minister of Education would speak in expressing tribute to Gerard 'Rasum' Shallow's family. I want to say that *Rasum* as he is popularly known died really at the prime of his life at fifty one. In an earlier period he ran for the NDP in 2001 and was a Senator here and we crossed swords, political swords metaphorically but in the years before he died we became friends and I was very happy to see that he supported the Reform of the Constitution, the 'Yes Campaign' and had endorsed the Unity Labour Party at the last general elections. In fact, I was happy to be counted among his friends and when I said at the funeral that I loved him and I acknowledged his immense contribution as a teacher, I meant that very sincerely. Some ascribe that to hypocrisy and opportunism, well; people have their own opinion wouldn't they?

All I know is that we were very close to each other; he accepted an invitation to go on an official visit to Cuba just a few months before he died. We spent a week there together and we got to bond even more and the measure of our friendship is that; and his wife knew it that though I did not get her the first time when I called when I heard of his death. But by the time I got her the second time she had already put a death announcement on the radio and said that she was trying to get me to seek my permission to put my name in the death announcement but she did not get me so she did it nevertheless, because she knew that we were good friends in the same way that he was a good friend of the Honourable Member for the Southern Grenadines whose name was also mentioned in the death announcement. And I want to thank Reverend Cato for accepting my lateness to the funeral which I had indicated in advance to the Honourable Minister of Education that I would be late. She was then acting Prime Minister and when I came from Suriname from the Caricom meeting, I was very happy that Reverend Cato accorded me the opportunity to say a few words: to give me the indulgence to say a few words.

We will have some honour of Rasum's name through something in the field of Education and or Culture, and I want this family to know that I am there for them; I am their friend and I love them very much. And I am with them at this difficult time in their lives. I am obliged.

**HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognise the passing of a number of individuals, some have already been mentioned in previous presentations. I wish to start with the condolences of the family of Rasum Shallow who served this House for a period of just about 4½ years as Senator: a recommendation. Rasum was a very easy person to get along with, but he was deeply committed to culture in particular the calypso art form and to education. Much of his life was spent pursuing goals in those directions. He died young 51 years of age and St Vincent has therefore lost someone in his prime and who would have gone on. If you listen to the presentations by the school at which he taught, his last school, you would recognise how popular he was both with the teaching staffing and the students of that school. I think their presentations at the funeral were outstanding in the sense that one felt the depth of affection that they did hold Rasum in during his period there at the school. I just wish to say to his family that in the end you know, God knows best.

I wish also to pay respect to Mrs. Lucy Cato wife of former Prime Minister Milton Cato and she did not live very far away from me, and I can describe her as a very generous, gentle and genteel woman. I have seen her on so many occasions and she had the sort of humility which I found very striking. And many people are not aware of how generous she was. In fact, she gave a lot of herself and of her resources to people in St Vincent and the Grenadines who needed it and we are sorry at her parting and I wish to offer my condolences to the rest of the family.

Carl Glasgow, lawyer and sportsman someone whom I regarded as a very good friend as we all know has passed on to the great beyond. You know, I remember the Prime Minister made reference to his time with the Grammar School in the '60's and his cricket prowess; but he had a kind of grace on the cricket field, which one did not find in many other places. He was very smooth, if he was in the field and the ball is coming at him there was a way that he picked up the ball and throws it back into the wicket which seems to be one simple act. He really was exemplary in that regard. I know of his high jump record which was referred to and this stood for a long time and in those days you did not have any sponge to back you up when you went over the bar, you dropped in the bay sand and Carl really was a master in that area.

He was also a committed Vincentian in the sense that he was deeply concerned about the issues of the day and he was not afraid to speak about them to anyone. I remember the last time we met on a social occasion he told me something which I haven't forgotten that every morning he had to take twenty six tablets: twenty six tablets you know, and when he told me that this was at a social function and a lot of the mirth went out of the function. Imagine someone having to go through that process every day, every morning because of ailment. And it told me something about his determination, his will to fight and his will to live [inaudible] for a long time. The last time I saw him in the hospital I wondered how long again he would be able to continue that battle. I heard a rumor the morning of the cricket, Sunday, that he was going to do the toss, and I found out later on that in fact that was going to happen but he was too weak. I want to say to his wife and to his children, I send on behalf of my family and myself our deepest condolences.

Das Da Silva, much has been said of him today but he was in fact a very successful business man in St Vincent and the Grenadines and made a very significant contribution to the development of our country and without much recognition given to his contribution. He had an approach which belied his determination being cool and collected at all times. Behind that all was a drive and a determination to make good for himself, his family and this nation; again my condolences.

Again I was very shocked yesterday morning when I was called and told that Creech Wood had died. I immediately phoned his sister to find out whether that was in fact true and learn that it was so. My mind went back immediately to the death of his brother not too long ago, on a motorcycle too and to the funeral of his father who we all know was an Inspector in the police force here and served for many years on the cycle. They are all somehow connected to motorcycle and two have died in accidents associated with motorcycle. As I knew him he was a very careful cycle rider and it is very sad to hear of his passing and again I want to just say to his family we offer our condolences at this difficult time.

There is another gentleman I want to mention who passed away a few days ago, he is known to everyone, I am sure to everyone in this House as Zarrack a taxi driver at the airport. I think most people would know him, he is of the constituency of East Kingstown and we often get involved in argument and debate over issues related to the development of St Vincent and the Grenadines. I never went to the airport without one of those debates, never! And just about two weeks ago I went to the airport to meet a friend who was coming in and I went into the booth there, I was inside, and as soon as I got in because they knew we were always having debates, Kingsley and the others started to egg him on so we had another debate. Little did I know that was his last, that was the last time I would see him and I was really surprised to hear of his passing; may our good God have Mercy on his soul and our condolences to his family. Much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I read of a man who stood to speak at a funeral of his friend and he referred to the dates on his coffin from the beginning to the end. He noted that first came his date of birth and spoke the following date with tears, but he said what mattered most of all was the dash between those years. For that dash represents all the time he spent alive on earth and now only those who love him know what that little line is worth for it matters not how much we own: the cars, the house and the cash but what matters is how we live and love and how we spend our dash.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I extend sincerest condolences once again to Gerard Shallow aka Rasum who suddenly left his family friends and the teaching profession earlier this month. Our records in the Ministry of Education show that he joined the teaching profession in October 1981 as a student teacher at the Cane End Government School; 2001-2005 Mr. shallow served as a Senator in this country's parliament. From 2006 he continued in his teaching career at the St Clair Dacon Secondary up to the time of death. He served as a teacher for twenty six years. He was a prolific song writer and musician. He has left us with his super inspirational hit "Perseverance" a song which continues to inspire our nation. He promoted steel pan music in his own special way. He was a member of the musical band "Exodus" and represented St Vincent and the Grenadines at Caribbean Music Festival in Cartagena and at the OECS Expo '91 in Antigua.

Our brother Rasum sang a sum entitled "Music Land" and so great was his love for music that Rasum said "Take me; I beg you take me to music land". Suddenly, we know that *Rasum* left but before he left I sat in the church, the Methodist Church in Marriaqua, Harvest Time and Rasum sang in the choir, to me it was as though his music was extra sweet. He was acknowledging the Creator of Heaven and earth creating all things and deep within me I felt that I should speak to him because of that great talent that he displayed. I called him aside and he flashed me a thirty-two teeth smile as he would normally do and I spoke to him in detail and he nodded his head and told me, yes: that what I said was right. I do not know if he followed up. Our community loved him, his name, a household name, will still be called for a very long time. Gailene Nishalle Rasum junior from the House of parliament, I ask that you be strong that you hold on and that you persevere; may Rasum's soul rest in peace.

Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Lucy Alexandra Cato a woman who touched my own life. The early '70's I was on the Executive of the National Youth Council and I remember she hosted a party for us one night, she took us into a blue room a room with blue carpet, painted blue and with blue curtains. The lady was so kind so good to those of us who were there. Mr. Speaker, I have something on paper which I think it would be very good for our Hansard about Mrs. Lucy Cato.

Lucy Ann Alexandra Cato was born in Nevis on September 13<sup>th</sup>, 1923. She was married on October 7th, 1950 in New York and she arrived in St Vincent and the Grenadines that same year. She was a member of St Vincent Infant Welfare Maternity League; member of Thompson's Home Committee. She was a member of the Music Council and Mrs. Cato was responsible for starting the Calliaqua Crèche with mother Stephens, Edna Dougan, Gladys Webb wife of Dr. Webb, Shirley Abbott Squires, Edith Georgie Toney and a few others. In music she was a Concert Pianist. Mr. Speaker, as I often say: "The lives of great men and women all remind us that we should make our lives sublime and departing leave behind us footprints on the sands of time". May Mrs. Cato rest in peace.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Member for Southern Grenadines.

**HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to pay my condolences to the family of late Gerard Rasum Shallow who served as a Senator inside of this House. As a matter of fact, the first time I ran and when we had the presentation of candidates Rasum was among the six of us on that day. I have known of Rasum before in the calypso arena, and I myself being a candidate was proud to meet the man who would have done so well in the cultural arena. As a matter of fact, I think one of his songs which did not receive much [Inaudible] was the one which I did with him when we were [laughs] ... the “Band Vision” was doing an album [laughs] and the reason for that [laughs] may be because I was the artist on the other side of it [laughter].

But Mr. Speaker, I have had good times with Rasum at his home, even at the studio at his home, you know downstairs he had a studio where on visiting there he would play music, we would sing you know, and talk about life and politics as it goes along. I remember the last time I spent with him and his family was at the lightning up campaign at Richland Park that night. You know, we were there and he was talking about his political aspirations and other things that we share. So, it was very hard for me when I heard early that morning, when I got the phone call and they said that Rasum had died; I could not believe it and I had to make two to three other calls to make sure that the information was correct. I would just like to say to his wife and his kids who I know very well, you know, God knows best why things happen.

In the early days being a Member of this House, you know, every lunch time it was Rasum and Ollivierre and “*Terro*” as he used to say, “*Terro* where are we having lunch today”? And you know both of us would go our merry way and it is very hard for me with somebody who I would have served with in this House having to, you know, attend his funeral that day. You know the outpouring at the funeral especially from the kids; the school children and the way in which they spoke about him Monday. They shared their love which they had for him and I think it was quite remarkable. And I would just like to wish his family, the students and all who would have known him let us cherish what he had shared with us, and let us count on God because He is the Author and Finisher of our Faith. Much obliged.

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

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK:** Mr. Speaker, I think a lot has been said this morning on a number of distinguish individuals who had one time or the other served social, political and cultural potent lives in St Vincent and the Grenadines. So, my thoughts and my expressions would be brief. I start first with Rasum Shallow former Senator whom I had the privilege to sit next to, of course, you would know, Mr. Speaker, the parliament was much shorter on this side in its configuration then, and I was at the tail end of that line and had to share a lot; the exchanges during those sessions and so I got to know him even better than I had known him before him being a household name in the field of calypso. I recall when I was at VINLEC one year when he did the song “King of the Road” and I think the potential steel band played in one of the panorama that day if I am not correct one of the most outstanding performance and everyone would know that his theme song “Perseverance” is one which we used on this side of the House very much for political campaigns and we enjoyed that bringing down the end of many of our political meetings. I have had my say on the matter before and I think today that the best way to respect him is to move on, on those comments and I need not comment any further.

I have to say a word, Mr. Speaker, on the passing of Creech Wood that is another family from the Lodge Village area that I know very well, New Montrose, Old Montrose, Block 2000, Green Hill, Kingstown Park even Lowman's Hill roll into one big community but the Wood family I know well. Everybody knows that the father was a distinguished policeman; in those days to be a traffic cop you were outstanding and you only had two or three of them. So, you could not miss them, people like himself and Bob and I remember later Jackson or I think among the same time perhaps they all were. If you were a traffic cop those days the whole nation knew you, you made your name on just that alone. I think he got above Inspector or he might have been Superintendent Woods, a very well sharply dressed policeman always, and the children came the same way.

Minister Francis spoke about his Son Vin Wood being our [inaudible] in Grammar School, every time I speak about Grammar School days the Honourable Minister gets a bit nervous but I know my limit Mr. Speaker. We are on Creech Wood but I will say this for Vin Wood who is his brother I recalled the day when Vin, Lance Dupont and myself got suspended from school and it so happened that Vin had his \$14.88 to pay his school fees and we got as far as Olive's Hotel where there was a Juke Box and Vin never made it back to school [laughs]. We never made it back to school, Mr. Speaker, [laughs].

Creech on the other hand had that same very strong humour of the family, I recall I think there was a funeral in Belmont and we were both in company of some elder persons, and as men would do they were making their jokes and a man turn to Creech and he said, "Boy, I am at that stage in my life now, I am just fluking"; and so from there on when we meet each other we would ask, "You fluking today"? The Speaker; would understand that: what it is like to be a fluker, in cricket that is, in cricket. [Laughs]

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Okay, I agree with that. [Laughter]

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK:** [Laughs] now, agreed. Mr. Speaker, when you wake up sometimes and you hear these death announcements it really shakes you up for the rest of the day, to tell you the truth and you do not catch yourself.

Das Da Silva, well he lives in Kingstown when the city was... worked in Kingstown when it was much differently configured domain. The rate at which things change, in those days the average business in Kingstown lived upstairs and did business downstairs now are things of the past. Of course, a young man in my father's business I had all the contact with the Da Silvas, Das; I used to make thirty six cents in those days delivering ice in the mornings before I go to school at the back of my carrier with my bicycle. Das would be one of the persons I would deliver ice to. Thirty six cents made you a fairly rich person for a young man even though you were working hard, but later in life when I had my own business Das was one of those considerate business persons. I do not know how many more of those types of enterprising and risk takers and hard workers we still have around; I mean they must be many but they work in a different kind way but you couldn't help but admire and learn from them. They did not make it to the schools that we did but you could not beat them in business sense at all and one has to respect them; and I noted that the business is carried on by his children and Ken who is generous to the core and we salute him.

Lucy Cato, again I borrow from the Member of East Kingstown: a genteel lady, one for whom we had great respect, I had the privilege to work with her husband, the late Milton Cato, in fact, he is the one who promoted me to Major something which you will hear me say in this parliament time and time again. And so, when in

later years and things were not as good and I had to go to that home once or twice to work in my own cleaning establishment, I always remember, we would not charge her for services because we thought that the family had done enough for us in different times.

So, Mr. Speaker, the passing of all these distinguished and outstanding Vincentians, and I have not completed the list here today, just reminds us of our own mortality and how important it is for all of us who are yet alive: to do good, speak good, think good of each other that when such time comes and we move on, our record not our words would have spoken for themselves. Much obliged.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Member for West Kingstown.

**HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS:** Mr. Speaker, I just want to endorse the sentiments expressed by all Honourable Members on the passing of several persons; and in particular Rasum Shallow. I believe was the Senator whom I replaced in this Honourable House, I never really knew lot of.

Mr. Speaker, Das Da Silva God rest his soul, clearly transferred some of his own business acumen to his children. His son Ken who studied engineering around the same time with me in Trinidad has branched out into the business world. Many persons may not even know that he was a professional civil engineer but it is the testimony of the kind of training instilled by his father.

And finally Mr. Speaker, growing up in Kingstown Park Lodge Village, Kingstown Park Sharpes was once more a community in the Wood's family and ours were well connected. In fact, my aunt lived right next door to Creech and his brothers, indeed one of his brothers went to technical college the same time with me. That reminds me, Mr. Speaker, that the Technical College which has celebrated its fortieth anniversary recently, I was surprised to find that in the newspapers, none of the persons that I am aware of who joined me as first time students at that school were even invited to participate in this auspicious moment but that perhaps speaks of the moment that we are living in. I wish only to say, Mr. Speaker, my condolences to all of the families of the members who are dead; [Inaudible] rest their souls.

## CONGRATULATORY REMARKS

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

**HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, on March 26th, 1912 a baby girl was born to Lavia Anderson ..... Sears in Marriaqua and today is her birthday; she is still alive and well. She was known to many of her relatives as cousin baby and Tante baby. I know that right now she is listening to us here in the parliament. She was a farmer; the older folks told us that she used to reach as far as Georgetown to buy cassava to bake farina. She did agriculture upon the farm estate and she sold her produce to help her with the only son that she gave birth to. He has since predeceased her. Cousin baby lived her name: Dorcas Anderson as is her right name; she lived like Dorcas of old whom Peter had raised from the dead. Cousin baby sewed, she made

clothes for people within the community. She looked after many, many of her relatives and she was a second mother to them.

Now, that her son has died the family has taken her into their care and she is very happy. Cousin baby most of all she loved the Lord, she witnessed to his love and care in the Methodist community and in her later years she has now joined the Seventh Day Adventist Church. When we visited her she is quite alert and she would sing songs of Moses, and she would sing and she would pray. Cousin baby, I know that you are hearing me; I want to say happy birthday to you and to let you know that we love you and that we would have remembered all the kind deeds that you would have done to your immediate family and to the community. My prayer for you today is that the good God of heaven would grant you a fresh anointing of his spirit that you would continue to praise him. Congratulations and happy birthday.

**HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to congratulate Miss Anita Snagg who celebrated her birthday on the 15<sup>th</sup> March, thereby being the first centenarian on the island of Canouan. A service was held: celebration service in her honour on the 16<sup>th</sup> March that is the Friday at the Canouan Sailing Club, it was a whole island affair, entertainment by the students of the Canouan Government School and of course after the service you know how island people normally celebrate. So, during part of that particular occasion someone taunted Tante Nita, she is commonly called, but she still managed to show them that her waistline was still working well, Mr. Speaker [laughs].

You know living [laughs] in those small communities and living so long obviously you would have touched the lives of many people. Her son Mr. Mc Laurean is the Commodore of the Canouan Sailing Club and her daughter Lucy Ann would have been very instrumental during the days, my early years of primary school, she was my teacher and also her daughter Mrs. Urcilla King she was also involved in the ferry business between St Vincent and the Grenadines. So, she is a lady when asked, “What is the secret to such long life”; and I think many of us in this parliament will take note of this because she said, “Never argue or curse with anyone leave them with all their stress”: that is she said is the formula for living long life. She still does everything for herself, wash, cook, iron and she takes her walk and all of this, so we will just like to wish her Godspeed and hope she continues in good health. Much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HONOURABLE CECIL MCKIE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to offer congratulations to the Department of Culture for putting on a number of successful activities to celebrate National Heroes and Heritage Month. The Department coordinated the primary schools Theatre and Art Festival they also coordinated the annual pilgrimage to Balliceaux, the Wreath Laying Ceremony at Dorsetshire Hill and they worked along with the Cycling Association, La Gracia Dancers, the organisation in Fancy, in Greiggs in Evesham and North Windward to celebrate that month of activities. Some of those activities have grown to be so large that an assessment is being done to see how they can be better coordinated for National Celebrations 2013.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I also wish to offer congratulations to the Garifuna Heritage Foundation, President David Darkie Williams and Coordinator Mike Brown for their excellent effort at coordinating the first ever International Garifuna Festival [knocking on desk]. We were joined here in St Vincent and the Grenadines

by presenters and participants from Belize, Honduras, Dominica, the USA, Canada, Venezuela, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago for three days of intense dialogue and discussion. And at the end of that high level series of discussions they were able to come up with a declaration and that declaration focuses among other things on the revitalization and encouragement of the Garifuna Heritage, language and culture of St Vincent and the Grenadines. Cooperation between countries as outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding and Alliance between ethnic community development organisations in Honduras and St Vincent and the Grenadines. The convening of an annual Garifuna studies conference or colloquium in St Vincent and the Grenadines, the retrieval and documentation of historical and cultural information about the Garifuna people, the preservation and protection of the island of Balliceaux as a sacred heritage site for the use of future generations.

Mr. Speaker, they were also able to open the Garifuna Research Centre at Arnos Vale and this is going to be very important going forward in preserving this heritage because it would allow students to go and do the necessary research, it would allow us to develop different aspects of the Garifuna heritage and it will also allow us to perform alliances with other countries and organisations to further the Garifuna Heritage. I should mention that the Ministry of Culture we would be looking into putting up a welcome as it is stated in English at the ET Joshua Airport so that we can welcome our visitors to St Vincent and the Grenadines in Garifuna language and of course we are going to be looking at putting up a museum at Dorsetshire Hill not too far away from the Obelisk that we can also commemorate the life of our first Paramount Chief Joseph Chatoyer.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to extend congratulations to everyone, the West Indies Cricket Board, St Vincent and the Grenadines Cricket Association, National Sports Council, Ministry of Sports and all individuals and parties that would have added their energies into making the hosting of the three one day internationals a huge success in St Vincent and the Grenadines [knocking on the desk]. Indeed, we were able to put up a fantastic show to the world but not only a show to the world but we were able to create that atmosphere that allowed the West Indies team to break the seventeen years or so vice that we were in with the Australians; and we were able to not lose the one day series right here in St Vincent and the Grenadines [knocking on the desk]. In fact, the excellent accommodation of both teams at the Buccament Bay Resort, which led both teams to declare that it is the best facility that they ever stayed at, intimates an outstanding work put on by the Ministers and Ministry of Finance, Sports Agriculture and Health.

The monies, in fact, in excess of \$50 million that would have been utilised to develop the Arnos Vale Playing Field and other facilities; the over \$200,000 that was used to prepare for the three one-day international; the atmosphere at Arnos Vale Playing Field on all three match days; the beauty of the Arnos Vale facility both the outfield, infrastructure and ambience; the granting of a public holiday on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2012; the declaration of that day as Winston Davis Appreciation Day and through the National Lotteries Authority the donation of US\$10,000 to Winston Davis; the full to capacity crowds on Sunday and Tuesday at the facility and the combination of all of these factors to ensure that West Indies did not lose the series I think all of this individually or combined could have made the front page story of any newspaper throughout the Caribbean. [Applause]

We had an opportunity, and we still have an opportunity to be able to say to the world that we are proud to be Vincentians who have hosted successfully these three one-day internationals, I think we need to hold this up high for the world to see, we need to protect all of our officials that would have been able to participate in this

process and we would be able to continue to host successful one-day internationals and other games at the Arnos Vale arena. [Applause] Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, Senator Francis.

**HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with the Honourable Minister of Sports in extending congratulations on the achievement at Arnos Vale, and more so I want to congratulate and thank the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines for coming out in their thousands [Applause] at Arnos Vale on all three days much to the dislike of many persons who predicted a poor showing at the Arnos Vale for the three one-day. Mr. Speaker, it showed that if we prepare ourselves and offer good entertainment to the people of this country they will be there to support you.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I saw togetherness out there, the Leader of the Opposition sat in a box three seats away from me and I proudly displayed on Sunday, Mr. Speaker, when I came in, I made sure because I was given a yellow wristband and my initial burst when I got in was to hail the Leader of the Opposition in the stand and say, “Good day Sir, how are you”? [Laughter] And I showed my yellow band [laughter] and I wore the yellow band all day, and it showed that level of togetherness that cricket brings to all.

So, congratulations to St Vincent and the Grenadines for displaying their hospitality and love for the game of cricket. [Interjections] [Laughter] They ran out of red, Mr. Speaker, they did not expect so many persons, I mean I cannot remember any cricket match that we have had here that there was an announcement the day before: “Your money is no use to you at Arnos Vale tomorrow, because you cannot get any ticket to buy, so do not come out there”. That was said on radio the night before: “Please do not come and look for ticket the next day”. Every single seat was sold out.

Mr. Speaker, my main purpose for standing is today is the 26<sup>th</sup> March and Wednesday is the 28<sup>th</sup> March [applause] I believe that the 28<sup>th</sup> March has been etched indelibly in the history of St Vincent and the Grenadines and in the history of politics and will never be wiped out. It is eleven years since the Unity Labour Party won the election on the 28<sup>th</sup> March, 2001. This year while our celebrations may be on a lower scale because of last year, with the refusal of the New Democratic Party to accept the results of the 13<sup>th</sup> December elections 2010. There was great turmoil last year and the supporters of the Unity Labour Party laid way, laid bare, stayed instructions from their political leader for the NDP to take over and close down the City of Kingstown from January despite my threat to whistle. From January to ... well, the 14<sup>th</sup> December on five occasions they came into the City to close it down but on the 28<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> March the Unity Labour Party went to Rabacca to celebrate with our usual rally and then on the 28<sup>th</sup> March, we came into the City on the Monday 28<sup>th</sup> March last year \$10,000 plus in Heritage Square putting to rest the turmoil that existed from the 13<sup>th</sup> December to the 28<sup>th</sup> March [applause]

And another victory was created on the 28<sup>th</sup> March, 2011 because on the 5<sup>th</sup> April the New Democratic Party responded to close down the City again and their tribe, their mass band was 200 strong; since then you have heard nothing about closing down the City, you have heard nothing except the usual thing that this month we give them three months, we give them six months and we give them a year. Well, one year gone already and we are into the second year so, I want to thank again the supporters of the Unity Labour Party for coming out last year and settling the matter. We settled it on the 13<sup>th</sup> December and we settled it again on the 28<sup>th</sup> March last

year, and we have put them at bay to sit down and accept the victory of the Unity Labour Party that would take us into the next election constitutionally due by 2015.

Mr. Speaker, tomorrow night on my programme on STAR Radio, I normally host a programme for the Unity Labour Party as General Secretary, I will announce the details of our celebration this year and I just want to say that Sunday the first is All Fools Day and I remember that I was sworn in on All Fools Day as a Minister. The Prime Minister was sworn in I think on the 29<sup>th</sup> and he swore us in on the 1<sup>st</sup> April, All Fools Day and the Opposition ranted and raved, “Yea fooling them”. Well, I have been here for eleven years celebrating eleven All Fools Days; so on Sunday the 1st April, we will be going to Rabacca with a family day, I will not give the details in parliament, this is not the place for it; but tomorrow night on my programme on STAR Radio at 8:00 o’clock listen to the details and we will be out at Rabacca celebrating on Sunday. [Interjection] that is fine my brother, you can come across, the cross-country road is not quite ready but the track is still there where the Garifuna had it, you can walk across and celebrate with us.

So, Mr. Speaker, congratulations to the supporters of the Unity Labour Party from Fancy in the North to Union Island in the South, all of the Unity Labour Party supporters I say congratulations on your eleventh anniversary of the victory of 2001. Thank you. [Applause]

### **CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES**

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move that the Minutes of the sitting of this Honourable House held on the 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2012 be confirmed.

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

### **ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER**

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** No special announcement except to say I am sure that Members would have seen the Honourable Senator Frederick leaving. She had indicated to me earlier that she was not sure whether she would have been able to sit in the whole parliament. She is unwell but she was trying to be tough and so on; but she says, she suddenly had to give in; so she had to leave and we wish her all the best, and hope that she makes a very speedy recovery.

### **STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

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

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, as I have been doing since 2009: early 2009 to report to this Honourable House and also on other occasions outside of this

Honourable House; to report to the nation as to the steps, the progress which we are making in relation to the British American Insurance Company CLICO Insurance matters. I do not want to traverse grounds that I have done repeatedly; simply to indicate that at Cabinet on Wednesday, I brought the Cabinet up to date on the progress for the recapitalisation on the sale of BAICO Traditional Insurance business. And I indicated the funds for the recapitalisation and related initiatives that they will come from the Liquidity Support Fund: that is to say the Caricom Petroleum Fund Deposit, held at the Central Bank, which I have spoken about repeatedly; specifically to get from the Cabinet which I received authorisation for the Minister of Finance to sign the deed of delegation and appointment on behalf of St Vincent and the Grenadines, to direct the Attorney General to provide advice on any steps that may be required to effect the deed including registration; and to authorise the waiver of taxes, any taxes, duties and other government charges that are payable or charged by the government or any of its authorities or departments; and which apply to the transaction and any related initiatives. Mr. Speaker, this is really to give effect to a process which is on the way in respect of the sale of the traditional business. As we know, the bids have been done, the bids have been assessed and very shortly, all the requisite documentation which would follow the decision for sale to a particular entity, and of course, we will require the waiver of taxes, duties and other government charges.

Mr. Speaker, may I just by way of information indicate that in the document which I presented to the Cabinet: this is for the Traditional Insurance - we are not dealing here now with the Investment Policies and the Annuities; we are addressing the Life Policies, Term, Endowments and the like. Eighteen thousand seven hundred policyholders will benefit from the recapitalisation and sale, which number represents roughly two thirds of BAICO's policyholders in the Currency Union. The other one third or thereabout would be for the Annuities, Investment Policies and the like. And just to show the numbers, this is for the Traditional Business, the highest numbers are in Grenada 4,725, followed by St Kitts Nevis 3,960, then followed by St Vincent and the Grenadines 3,515 persons who hold the policies will benefit: this is its traditional line; then Antigua and Barbuda, sorry, St Lucia 3,321, Antigua and Barbuda 1,706, Dominica 954, Anguilla 368 and Montserrat 127, but for us 3,515. [Interjection] Antigua is 1,706 [interjection] sorry, if I may go over them then, if I do them in alphabetical order. Anguilla 368, Antigua and Barbuda 1706, Dominica 954, Grenada 4,725, Montserrat 127, St Kitts and Nevis 3,960, St Lucia 3,321 and St Vincent and the Grenadines 3,515.

Mr. Speaker, one of the issues which we have raised in the sub-committee which I chaired in the Monetary Council dealing with insurance, there are about 2,700 policies across the Currency Union which have lapsed and really we have to be very practical. Most of these or at least let us say a significant number of these if not most of them would have lapsed because of the uncertainties so it is only fair that we seek to have the resources available to say to those persons, "Where you lapse: look if you pay up your outstanding premiums and interest for that particular period a new entity is buying so you would not have lost a great deal". I suspect individuals will decide as to how he/she does it. If you just had a Life Insurance Policy just for a few months you probably wouldn't worry but if you have made significant payment and for one reason and another it lapses ... and it is very difficult to know whether it is as a consequence of uncertainty; but I am pretty sure being a practical man of affairs some would have lapsed because of that. We are trying to see how we can take account of these things.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say this when I repeat this over and over, people think that I do it really for dramatic effect there is no public policy since the collapse of (BAICO) British American, which has consumed as much as my time as this, because it is so vital you are dealing with 15% of GDP.

One piece of news which I think would be good news, I did not want to say anything about it until the document which I have prepared and send to the Chairman of the OECS and sending to the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago; The Chairman of the OECS is Dr. Anthony of St Lucia, I take over in June. We met in Caricom that is to say the OECS countries and Barbados, we asked Barbados to be present at the meeting and we discussed the question of British American insurance Company from the standpoint of the Annuities and Investment Policy. As Honourable Members are aware the sum is in excess of US\$225 million for the Annuities. Now we had said we are seeking to get US\$150 million from Trinidad and Tobago and we ourselves would provide US\$75 million in the Currency Union. Honourable Members would recalled that when we anticipated a particular way in which this would be done through a company to continue, we had to put money in our budget for our portion of it but after Trinidad and Tobago changed their administration we had to go to plan (b).

But we are still asking for US\$150 million from them, it looks as though we will have to settle at US\$100 million from them. They had first of all said \$100, sorry they had first of all said US\$50 but it turns out that they were capitalizing the Caricom Petroleum facility and they did not inform us in all the discussions which were going on, so we are saying keep the US\$26 million which you have there put that with the US\$50 and they will find another US\$24 million to bring it up to the US\$100 million.

This plus the contributions across the Currency Union, we certainly first of all are going to take of everybody fully below TT\$75,000 that is to say EC\$34,200 or thereabout. Thirty four thousand, two hundred EC dollars is about seventy five thousand TT and that number amounts to about 70% of the Investment policyholder annuitants. Now, it looks likely that we are going to be able to give everybody something; but over the number for those who have policy in excess we have to see what is the extent of the resources we collect. Additionally, I should point out that the Registrar of insurance in St Vincent and the Grenadines has already given instructions to the lawyers to put in court the bank which held out that it was in a fiduciary position in relation to certain assets and that claim would be about \$140 million. It has taken a while for this statement of claim to be settled and I was advised on Friday that very shortly that statement of claim would be filed. A pre-action letter I have been advised has already been sent and of course as you know BAICO Judicial Managers they have put a number of individuals in court in Miami in relation to US\$75 million arising from what is called the Green Bay Property transaction about which I reported to this Honourable House So, as I make some progress I report to this Honourable House, this is a very detailed and involved matter.

The other matters concerning our relationship between Trinidad and Tobago that is to say the OECS regarding our upper airspace and in relation to the subsidy given to CARO, the LIAT issue, I raised all of those issues at CARICOM for our case is very strong in my view unanswerably very strong and discussions will continue with the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago on these matters very shortly plus to finalise, to dot some (i)s and cross some (t)s in relation to the progress which I am saying that we made at that meeting regarding the US\$100 million.

And these are monies separate and distinct from the US\$50 million which I had obtained from the Manning administration to put in the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank for purposes of the recapitalisation of the traditional life business of BAICO. I hope Honourable Members are clear about all matters. I know this is an involved subject and if anyone, Mr. Speaker, has any query to ask about this matter, I am prepared to give any short answer rather than for any clarification which may be required because I know it is of importance, to all our countries in the Eastern Caribbean.

I always repeat this that the Troubled Asset Recovery programmes monies, the so called TARP Funds of President Bush and Obama just under US\$1 trillion that amounts to under 1% of the GDP of the United States of America, the meltdown for British American CLICO amounts to liabilities of close to 16% of our GDP. If we had a 1% GDP problem it would have been difficult but not the challenge to the extent that this one is and again I ask for persons to have patience with us. This is a deeply involved issue and there are many twists and turns and I appreciate that many persons especially those who have had their annuities are suffering, finding it very difficult because of the meltdown of British American and CLICO.

Mr. Speaker, I am amused sometimes that you cannot get words more powerful than this in our Caribbean: Colonial Life, the word “Colonial”, British American when you have those three combining and if you put a dash of something else along to it, I do not want to say what that dash is they are very powerful words, they can lead you to buy anything. So, that is all I would want to report at this moment, Mr. Speaker.

Oh! By the way, may I just say in relation to CLICO what we call CLICO Barbados that is still a work in progress; the general insurance side has been sold that is to say the property and the motor. The Annuities and the Investment policies the Barbadian Government is still saying they are looking forward to a purchaser before the month of June. They had given us certain assurances and I want to add of course that in relation to CLICO “Barbados” that the liabilities do not as in the case of British American in relation to the assets, the assets to match the liabilities is not a number approaching zero. In the case of Barbados it is about 60%, so it is a problem, but less of a problem than the British American issue. There is a question on CLICO Trinidad which I would say something when I answer that; in relation to some monies from the former National Commercial Bank.

**HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE:** Mr. Speaker, in respect to the Annuities the Prime Minister indicated a figure of US\$225 million

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** In excess of.

**HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE:** In excess of US\$225 million, and gave an indication of the break out between the contribution expected from Trinidad and Tobago, apart from the rest and indicated that those below EC\$34,000

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** EC\$34,200.

**HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE:** Yes, EC\$34,200; those contributions can be covered so I understand it from the US\$100 million from Trinidad and Tobago, and a contribution from the OECS countries. Am I to make the assumption that there is no haircut involved in the Annuities and whether the US\$225 includes interest?

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Yes, the sum actually could cover those below \$34,200 will amount to a number of about US\$30 million. It is the number above that the 30% or so of the Annuitants are the ones who hold most of it. I have been advised for instance that in the case of St Vincent and the Grenadines there are persons who have holdings with British American as much as \$12 and \$13 million. Now, you can see some policy questions which arise there, should somebody who has \$13 million eh! While all the advice they could have to invest their monies, the taxpayer's monies would be taken to help to recover them. But we are trying to recover as much as we can doing the best we can do but as in Trinidad and Tobago those below \$75,000 they had a haircut in respect of their interest, so it is the same principle which we are applying since a large chunk of the money is coming from Trinidad and Tobago. But the persons with their Annuities below that number will recover their face value in full.

Those that are above that number it depends on how much money we have but we will seek to provide as best we can everybody first of all with the equivalent of \$34,200; and then to see how far up we can go whether some of the monies are going to be reflected in bonds, how far you will go. These are some large questions which we have to solve but what I want to make sure is that we take care ... remember this the basis on which we had proceeded are the following principles: first that this is a regional problem requiring a regional solution, therefore we cannot have a national solution, we have national contribution to the regional solution but it has to be regional since it is a regional problem. Secondly, we have to make sure that this insurance debacle does not metamorphose into a fully-fledged crisis to undermine the financial system, so we have to be concern about the financial stability of the country. I am sorry that I have to use debacle rather than debar but the English has gotten on me on it and said that I must use debacle so I use it but most reluctantly.

Then we have to make sure that as far as practicable we minimise the losses on individual policyholders and annuitants, and then of course to have the business continue as much as it possibly can as an ongoing enterprise. Those are the foundation principles and we are still trying to apply them in the twist and turn of the real world: okay.

**HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE:** I fully understand, so effectively what is being said in terms of a settlement is that the annuitants below \$34,200 will take a haircut of the interest; and in the case of those who are above that; discussions are ongoing that would expect, given the larger figure haircut as low as mine?

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Well, those who do not have hair as you have we would at least try to provide you with a comb [laughs]. You would appreciate that above that it is a real challenge and then there are issues involving institutions, banks, credit unions et cetera, et cetera this is not an easy one but as would be noted, we are making progress. We are making progress for instance with British American with by far first of all most of the policyholders that is to say Traditional Life; in the case of St Vincent and the Grenadines 3,515 and we are trying to make some accommodation in relation to those whose policies had lapsed. But now when we come to the annuities, which would be - we say the policyholders and the life: the Traditional Life, it is about 2/3 so we are looking at another 7,000-8,000 annuitants; let us just shorten it and call them annuitants but 70% or thereabout of that number can be accommodated with a figure the figure below \$34,200; is then when you begin to go above that now that we are having some challenges. So, the vast majority of people who are listening to me would have relief. There are some that relief is still a little way down the road in respect of how we can get through all the numbers.

Let us face it too, St Vincent and the Grenadines we are anxious to raise monies to help to provide for whatever portion we can do of the original \$75 million but some countries may balk and that may help to hold up the regional solution too. Some people may say well let us wait and see what legal actions, what is the result of legal actions. In our own case we are starting one here from which some resources should be available assuming that we are successful or if there is a settlement and then of course there is the one the action: \$US75 million action by the Judicial Manager of BAICO in relation to the Florida property. Honourable Members would recall that on that transaction a number of persons made US\$75 million on one single day, they bought a property for one price in the morning and sold it over in the afternoon to a series of companies to British American to \$75 million more in one day. Now, I presented all the data on that so this is a very involved matter requiring a multiplicity of forms of advice as you would appreciate that is an issue on which I received lots of legal advice, lots of technical actuarial advice, it is an involved matter very, very involved and we have to stay on top of it to solve it or at least to have the diminution of this particular challenge. I am obliged.

**HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE:** I want to make sure I understand that 70% of the Annuitants BIACO I am talking about here will need to get US\$30 million assuming a haircut of all the interest.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** That is the advice to me of the core committee. [Interjection] Thank you, Mr. Speaker, if at there is anytime that they rework their numbers and they give me any other I will indicate that to you, but that is how I am presently advised.

## REPORTS FROM SELECT COMMITTEE

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

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I do have here the Report from the Select Committee on the Interviewing of Suspects for Serious Crimes Bill 2012 and also the Minutes and I beg to lay it on this table of this Honourable House.

Mr. Speaker, regarding the Select Committee on the Cooperatives Bill, we are half way through that Bill during the Select Committee, you know it is a very large Bill we will be ready at the next sitting of this Honourable House.

## QUESTIONS FOR ORAL ANSWERS

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Question No. 1 Honourable Leader of the Opposition. [Interjection] let us check it out. Just let me see something, I should have the statement; 2011 [searching] 2011 is the statement. Okay thank you.

1. *The Honourable Arnhim Eustace (Leader of the Opposition) asked the Honourable Minister of Agriculture:*

*Would the Honourable Minister please give the breakdown of the weekly banana exports to the region and outside of the region for the last (8) shipments up to the week ending March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012?*

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Minister for Agriculture, question No. 1

**HONOURABLE SABOTO CAESAR:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to outline these figures and the breakdowns within the context that we are operating a banana industry in the aftermath of Hurricane Tomas and that we would have estimated a negative impact that Hurricane Tomas would have had on the Banana Industry during its passage and that we are also being affected presently by two dreaded diseases one being the black leaf spot and the other being Moko. Mr. Speaker, week four which ended on the 27<sup>th</sup> January we exported 2595 boxes: 180 through WINFARM UK, 360 WINFARM to the region and 2055 through original licenses. Week five which ended on February 3<sup>rd</sup> there were no boxes exported to WINFARM UK and that trend continued right up to week eleven, which ended on March 16<sup>th</sup>. However, Mr. Speaker, week five which ended February 3<sup>rd</sup>, to the region we exported 976 through WINFARM and through the regional licenses 689 a total of 1,665.

Week six which ended February 10<sup>th</sup> 266, 263 sorry, Mr. Speaker, went to the region through WINFARM, 535 went to the region via the regional licenses a total of 798. Week seven which ended on February 17<sup>th</sup> we had 379 WINFARM the regional, 752 original licenses, 1,131 total cartons. Week eight which ended on February 24<sup>th</sup>, WINFARM to the UK 180, original licenses 1,371. Week number nine which ended March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 415 to the region through WINFARM, 55 to the region to the licenses 470. Week ten which ended on March 9<sup>th</sup> we had 148 cartons going through WINFARM to the region and 1,131 going to the region via the regional licenses a total of 1,279. Week eleven which ended on March 16<sup>th</sup> 455 went to the region through WINFARM, 710 to the regional licenses and 1,165 in total.

Mr. Speaker, over the last eight weeks we exported to the UK through WINFARM 180 and I said earlier in the breakout that over the last one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight weeks we did not send any to the UK through WINFARM. Over the last eight weeks, Mr. Speaker, WINFARM through the region 3,176 and to regional licenses 7,118. Over the last eight weeks we had a total to the UK through WINFARM, WINFARM original and original licenses of 10, 474 cartons. And as I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, this is not a problem that is indigenous to St Vincent and the Grenadines; it is affecting all the banana producing islands of the sub-region and we are really at this stage because of the aftermath of Hurricane Tomas and the two diseases that we are fighting. I am obliged, Mr. Speaker.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Question No. 2, Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

**HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE:** There is a clarification, Mr. Speaker, regional licenses mean what? How does that relate to the other local company that is exporting bananas; less regional licenses?

**HONOURABLE SABOTO CAESAR:** Mr. Speaker, if I may expound those bananas which are sent by the producer groups and traffickers are captured under regional licenses.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Question No. 2, Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

2. *The Honourable Arnhim Eustace (Leader of the Opposition) asked the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance:*

*Would the Honourable Prime Minister please indicate whether the EC\$10 million received from Trinidad and Tobago arising from the former NCB investment in CLICO will be used to assist annuity holders who have been affected by the existing crisis?*

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Prime Minister, Minister of Finance.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, if I may just say this first of all widely; a number of institutions have or had investment policies annuities with CLICO Trinidad and I spoke earlier in my statement about British American Insurance Company and CLICO Barbados. The position of the law in Trinidad and Tobago is that - the Insurance law is that only monies which are in the statutory fund can be paid out to policyholders, ordinarily residents in Trinidad and Tobago on the statutory fund. We have taken the position that under the revised Treaty of Chaguaramas that law is contrary to the equal treatment provision in the revised Treaty of Chaguaramas and therefore has no validity that under a Trinidad and Tobago Company: that is to say CLICO Trinidad and Tobago if the Government of Trinidad and Tobago is treating its own citizens in a particular manner they must treat everybody in the community in a like manner; that is in relation to CLICO Trinidad.

Now, even though there is a deficiency of funds in the statutory fund in relation to the liabilities under the policies of Trinidad and Tobago there are other assets either of CLICO Trinidad but through its parent entity CL Financial in which resources from St Vincent and the Grenadines and the other places went to purchase and we do not have those assets. So, our position that we have to be treated in precisely the same manner in respect of CLICO Trinidad; this is not an issue of a negotiation this is an issue which is a juridical responsibility as we see it. So, in the case of British American there is a slight difference because British American is a Bohamian Company but all its back offices arrangement and treatment was done in Trinidad and under the suzerainty obviously of CL Financial Company in Trinidad and Tobago. Its body mind and soul were resident; so that there is a case for the contribution from British American but not to the same extent as there is in respect of CLICO Trinidad.

Now, Honourable Members would recall that when we did the sale from the National Commercial Bank to the 51% share holding: to Eastern Financial Share holdings in St Lucia; I insisted that monies coming from any British American CLICO policies will come not to the successor Bank of St Vincent and the Grenadines but would come to the Government of St Vincent and The Grenadine since we had made provision completely for a it prior to the sale. In other words the value of the bank would have been more had we not made a full provision, and therefore, because we have made the full provision before, whatever monies come would have to come to the Government and that was signed upon, so that these are additional monies, in fact to the actual sale price of the 51%.

I must say this, Mr. Speaker, and it is so important that I do not really want to pat myself on the back with this but the people would be able to tell you when the final draft came back the day, they said, well we must sign it, after I had raised these issues both by the officials in my Ministry and all the Banks Lawyers and those overseas; I said, “Let me read it overnight before I sign”. And when I looked, I saw that there were two things that they had to put in, one the lands to be returned: the thirty-seven acres of lands, sorry, the \$37 million worth of lands to be returned and also these monies. They put the lands in, but this one was omitted, so I told them, “No I can sign this way” you have to go ... because all now so, the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines would have crucified me to know that I made full provision on certain matters and then when payments are to be made I have to share it with the purchasers when that was not taken into account. And it was something easy to slip by if you were not insisting on it, and my legal knowledge certainly helped and my general hearing in these transactions. I am not perfect in these things but I have to make sure that we protect the interest of the country.

Now, whatever monies we collect as the Honourable Member knows it goes to the consolidated fund, a check would be made to the consolidated fund or whatever treatment and in the settlement overall we were expecting to make a certain contribution as I indicated with British American that we will make whatever contribution we are required to make within the framework of a regional settlement. So, this is not a question of taking one set of money, it comes into the consolidated fund. If I may just say this, the National Insurance Services had about \$41 million I think the figure was I thought it was \$38 first [inaudible] about \$41 million out of the \$58 or \$59 million for all the insurance and they are getting back those monies, so which would make ... remember in the last ... a provision up to a certain quantum was made which made the “profit” of the insurance company NIS diminished. Obviously, as I had indicated in the House at the time if there is any prepayment on these that it would come as though it is a windfall and would be reflected in the balance sheet. Instead of just giving answer in a specific sense I put it within the context so that Honourable Members and the general public would grasp what we are about.

### **SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

**HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE:** So, in effect the \$10 million would be used as part of St Vincent’s contribution, the contribution that is required from the OECS?

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Money is fungible, money is fungible, it comes in, we use it, when it arrives in, we use it for purposes which are incidental and which are normal in a government’s expenditure. But if we have to put in \$30 million into the pool, we will put in \$30 million into the pool in order that whatever we arrived at regionally as a settlement: to make our own contribution.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Question No. 3 Honourable Leader.

3. *The Honourable Arnhim Eustace (Leader of the Opposition) asked the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance:*

*Would the Honourable Prime Minister please indicate the fiscal outturn as at the end of February 2012 as compared with February 2011?*

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, the numbers look compared to 2011 better, but as I said when I answered in respect of January when the Honourable Member was not here, “One swallow does not a summer make”, eh! [Interjection] [Laughs] and “Two swallows do not a swallow make”. Though in the first month we did not see a deficit, we see a deficit in the second but compared to last year it is an improvement. Total Revenue and Grants up to this point was \$58.99 million that is to say for the first two months [interjection] eh! Up to the end of February; \$58.9 last year it is now \$70.39. Current Revenue last year for the first two months was \$58.59 million, for this year’s two months \$66.7 million. So, you noticed that the Current Revenues have gone up by roughly 14% thereabout. Capital Revenue and Grants as you would see from the difference between the Current Revenue and the total Revenue and Grants, last year it would have been about 0.39% or \$396,000.00 and this year it is \$3.6 million. Total Expenditure last year up to this point was \$82.16 million and this year is \$73.17 million. Recurrent Expenditure \$81.06 this year \$72.8, I should point out that areas where we are seeing a significant improvement the increase for goods and services by about 27% and we see an increase in the personal emoluments.

The current balance last year at the end of two months the deficit was \$22.4 million, at the end of two months this year is \$6.1 million and the overall balance this would be after Grants clearly, last year it was \$23.17 million and this year it is \$2.78, so an improvement compared to last year, but again I always caution and given the volatility which exists but we are trying to mix as we say prudence and enterprise.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Question No. ... Supplementary?

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

**HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE:** Let me just confirm that with respect to total expenditure it is \$82.7 million for 2011?

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** No, \$81.06 million for 2011,

**HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE:** \$81.06 million.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** and \$72.8 million for 2012, total, the Recurrent Expenditure; total Recurrent Expenditure not total Expenditure.

**HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE:** Total Recurrent Expenditure.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** \$81 million against \$72.8.

**HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE:** Where is the decline? Where is it reflected?

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** In the Recurrent Expenditure?

**HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE:** Yes.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** The declines have been interest we have seen a 28.5% decline in interest and we have seen a 28.7% in transfers and subsidies. We are trying to hold the statutory

enterprises on a tight leash but the goods and services went up. But of course, I must add this when you say goods and services go up by 27% you are really talking about \$1.5 million to \$2 million because it is the first two months that you are dealing with, so you are dealing with small base numbers really, so the percentages look larger.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Question No. 4 Honourable Member for the Northern Grenadines.

4. *Dr. the Honourable Godwin Friday Representative of the (Northern Grenadines) asked the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance:*

- a. *What is the policy concerning searching of passengers travelling from the mainland to the Grenadines via the Grenadines wharf at Kingstown; and*
- b. *Why are passengers regularly subjected to search of their belongings at the wharf?*

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

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, let me just say this, the law enforcement authorities in this country address the searching of passengers wherever they are travelling upon the intelligence which they have received in relation to certain matters. And I want to advise - the Honourable Member does not necessarily have to take my advice on this, and I will outline few things but the Minister of Tourism had reported to me and so too the Commissioner of Police at meetings, which the business people and other community stakeholders in Bequia held with them. I do not know if you were a participant of those meetings; asked them "Please institute an enhanced regime of searching", because of people who are missing goods.

And it is easy when they move from the Grenadines coming up to the mainland and I want to say this there is often the suggestion given the history of relations, I do not live on Mars because the Northern Grenadines for instances historically have supported the New Democratic Party there is a feeling that if they are searched, persons are searched that it is something political. I just want to say this that most of the persons who are searched are actually people from mainland St Vincent from this place here, this territorial area what we call St Vincent as distinct from Bequia or the Grenadines because you have a lot, a lot of people who are travelling between St Vincent and Bequia persons who are from here. Many of them of course reside in Bequia too, so I want to put the issue clear to the extent that we have searches anywhere, it is nothing to do with any geographic bias, nothing to do with any consideration other than law enforcement authority interest in dealing with a security problem.

And the stakeholders in Bequia have demanded of ... the Minister of Tourism came to me and said, "Prime Minister, I want to tell you what was said in this regard". "I said, I am told that by the Commissioner and I do not have to tell the Commissioner to institute any set of measures at any port, they do it as their security circumstances demand and the intelligence tell them. Now, we have had to step up at all of our ports of entry because border security challenges are very serious. It is serious in relation to smuggle goods, it is serious in

relation to stolen goods, in relation to drugs: illegal drugs and that is why for instance we have the surveillance completely around St Vincent 360% a radar system, two radar sites which covers every vessel which comes in and every vessel which goes out, so that we have to simply strengthen ... soon we would like to have one in the Grenadines but the administration in Trinidad changed and we did not get the third one and I am still trying to get the third one.

Then matters have become even more complicated with the ISPS code: the International Shipping and Port Security Code and we have had to spend as a consequence of the ISPS Code over \$4 million to make certain changes and every year we spend \$1.7 million on Port Security; \$1.7 million it is in the Estimates. Mr. Speaker, regular security audits unannounced are undertaken by the US Coastguard and Port Security; they turn up here and they do not tell us because they want to check. In fact, one such audit was conducted as recently as last month in February and the persons who head it came to me and said that they are very pleased that St Vincent and the Grenadines is taking the port security seriously. One of the reasons they do this, a lot of persons do not appreciate this and I am glad that I get the opportunity to explain it, if we do not pass the security checks they can put restrictions on us in respect of vessels coming to St Vincent. Could you imagine a vessel leaving the United States to say you can come to St Vincent because they do not think you have proper port security, you know what that means for us? We buy goods and services; one Honourable Minister of Social Development says, "Problems would affect barrels" but it is not just barrels, it would affect that and it would affect other things too.

To date no major security breach or defect has been reported from the audits at Port Kingstown, Campden Park, ECGC (Eastern Caribbean Group of Companies) Arnos Vale or Bequia. There is a challenge, the close proximity of the cruise terminal and the Grenadines ferry pier demands that special security arrangements be put in place to avoid what ... you know what these people in the security audit call it, that we have to take measures to avoid "contamination" it is not a word that I would use but they are using it from the standpoint of security especially when cruise ships are in port.

In 2011 eleven arrests were made with seizure of illegal drugs at the Grenadines pier, 2012 so far we have three of those, the last one being the 22<sup>nd</sup> March. We got to be searching our ports of entry for illegal immigrants and substances, you have easy access; people could come in through the soft underbelly in the Southern Grenadines and come up you know [interjection] aah! Yes, but also people going down same thing, up and down; up and down, [interjection]. You do not have any problem when they coming up but also going down so that we in the Grenadines alone we have had over the last about 40 illegal entries at our ports. I have the stats and all sorts of things, I do not need to go through them; but believe me we are trying to be very careful but we also understand that within the law of the land there are fundamental rights and freedoms of people for their freedom of movement and we are not, we have no desire and the law enforcement authorities have no desire to curb any of that; upon intelligence they make certain checks and I give you that assurance.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary question.

### **SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

**DR THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY:** Mr. Speaker, I do not think anyone would second guess security arrangements and authorities with respect to searches conducted upon intelligence but the question was

specific to speak about searches at the wharf in Kingstown. And it relates to persons who are boarding at the Kingstown Ferry where virtually every package is searched as it comes through the gate it is not random, I have watched it, and the packages are opened and not resealed, and just pushed aside and people are getting very upset about it. So the question is whether the security arrangements that you speaking of Prime Minister involves that every package, every cart, every box that passes through the gate is to be searched if it is on its way to the Southern Grenadines or to the Northern Grenadines or any way down. And it has nothing to do with politics this is just as you are saying about people moving freely through the country.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, there is no policy to search every individual crossing or re-passing any part of St Vincent and the Grenadines but I cannot sit where I am in my office as Minister of National Security and the police may have some form of intelligence to tell them that they must not carry out a search. I know when the police on mainland St Vincent on particular times of the year try to search every vehicle which passes and re-passes the highway people get very upset; but sometimes the police know what they are looking for and they do not even tell me. I do not need to know unless it is a major national security issue and of course in the case of vehicles when they search them and I am not trying to shift the conversation they also find out who do not have insurance and, who do not have license, which is to protect the citizen of the country also.

I find it difficult to say to you, I know that there is no policy in that regard other than to assert that what I can do, I can say to the Commissioner of Police a Member of Parliament has raised question as to the extent of searches; and I will say to the Commissioner would you review this to see whether these searches are necessary and desirable in all the circumstances but I do not want to be put in the position and I have never done this as Minister of National Security to tell them to go somewhere and do this and not do that [interjection] okay, so we are on the same wave length.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Question No. 5 Honourable.

5. *Dr. the Honourable Godwin Friday, Representative of Northern Grenadines asked the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance:*

*In the recent Budget it was indicated that an average of 15% increase on property taxes payable and for those with substantially higher increases there will be a cap of 25%.*

- a. What is the highest rate of increase expected from the new proposed property taxes; and*
- b. how long is the 25% cap expected to be in effect so that the full increase will be eventually payable by the owner.*

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, currently we are now finalising the valuation list for the various distributions and we are not yet in a position to indicate which is the highest rate of increase from the new property tax. However, I noted that where we have significant or even substantial

improvement to property for instance in the case of rebuilding if somebody has a one room place and it is now a ... or if it was a two room place to a five room bungalow or six bedroom you would expect that the increase from what they had before to what they had to pay now would be significant. It follows, because you are using the market based value system, so that is how I will answer you the first part of the question.

I just want to answer the (b) part by reading what I said in the Budget and in the light of what I said in the first. As I indicated in my Budget Address:

**“Possible relief will be available by placing a cap on the applied rate. Accordingly transitional relief will be offered for individual’s property tax, which increases by more than twenty-five percent (25%). The assessment will be reduced where there are particular grounds to suggest that the market value is in incorrect and has not been calculated on a proper basis”.**

Now, some of these valuations the distributions are actually taking place right now; I was hoping to have a Bill coming here to give effect for when we start with the rest of it, unfortunately the extent of the work to finalise it was not completed. Those are the answers I have for you in relation to the query.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Question No. ...

**DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY:** Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, it was a clarification but; I read the Budget Address of the Honourable Prime Minister and the response was made that where there are errors in the assessment that there is some relief for those homeowners where their property taxes increased by more than 25% but there would be cases where the principles would be applied correctly and still there will be increases exceeding 25%. My question really relates to them because those are the people who would be really affected and there is no relief other than to say that there is as 25% cap. The point is whether this cap is permanent, whether it is going to be graduated to a point where it reaches the full amount and could it be that some persons will say that property tax is double or even more.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** The policy statement I think is the correct policy statement when Honourable Members see the numbers in actual terms Honourable Member would be able to say. I have seen them and from my vantage point I do not think this is an issue for alarm.

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

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, may I ask you a favour? I have an appointment at 1:00 o’clock and it is clear because we took a long time than usual on obituaries and ... if I may be permitted to answer (8), (11) and (13). I say (13) because that really should have been directed to me.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** (8) (11) and (13).

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Those are the ones which I have remaining (8), (11) and (13), except of course Honourable Members may wish me not to answer any of them so I can go.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** I have no [inaudible] all right we will deal with the questions for the Prime Minister, because I do not want to deny any of his questions. So, question No. 8 Honourable Member for Central Kingstown. You don't want to ask it?

**HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK:** Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for facilitating the Honourable Prime Minister.

8. *The Honourable St Clair Leacock Representative of Central Kingstown asked the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance:*

- a. *what was the capital adequacy of the NCB before its sale;*
- b. *was the capital adequacy changed when the government paid the \$100 million on its outstanding debt;*
- c. *what if any new capital over and above the 51% acquisition was invested in Bank of St. Vincent by the owner ECFH;*
- d. *what is the current market share of the Bank of St Vincent; and*
- e. *what are the dividend payout and the PE ratio of ECFH over the last five (5) years i.e. 2007 to 2011.*

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

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** I take it that PE means "price earning ratio".

**HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK:** Yes.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Okay because that one is a more common one on the last occasion that is why ...

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Question No. 8.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** The capital adequacy as at September 2010 before the sale of the 51% shareholding the Bank of St Vincent and the Grenadines was 21.2%. This figure was increased to 24.6% as at December 2010 after the sale, as you would see, yes 24%, you noticed that there is a slight increase and this would have led obviously to the reversal of any debt provision made prior to the sale.

Well, I am answering (a) and (b) together. (b) Was the capital adequacy changed when the government paid the \$100 million? It would have changed as a result of the cash injection resulting from the refinancing of government loans with the CDB. And clearly as you know the cash carries a higher weight than loans and advances, it follows. The normally capital adequacy in accordance with the ECCB guidelines which is accordance with the international guidelines from [inaudible] is 8%. The bank has been able to exceed this by at least 14%; in fact, since 2005 given a series of reforms which have been involved with in the bank we never had a problem with the bank with the capital adequacy ratio. And in part this is because of government's decision to use the retain profits to augment the bank's capital.

The (c) question, I should remind my Honourable Friend that the 51% acquisition was not capital injection; it was essentially the sale of government's majority shareholding in the bank. So, we simply got the money for the ... government got the money, the Accountant General got the money for 51%; and I have no information as to any additional investment cost incurred beyond the 51% acquisition.

In relation to this question I believe this is (d) Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members may be a little, some may be surprised and some not, the bank's current market share as at December 2011 total deposit 36%, total asset 35%, [interjection] (d) total market share: total deposit 36%, total assets 35%. [Interjection] yes the market share held by St Vincent and the Grenadines, I am given you what the numbers are: total deposit 36%, total ...

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Apparently, that is not what he is asking.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** The question asked: "what is the current market share of the bank of St Vincent and the Grenadines"? Yes, that is the one I am answering and I am saying that it is broken down for me in deposits, assets, loans and advances: 36% total deposits, 35% total assets and 41% total loans and advances.

In relation to the last question, Mr. Speaker, I believe, Mr. Speaker, if the Honourable Members would look at I suspect the ECFH it is a public trading company and I guess you would find information about the dividend payout and the PE ratio for Eastern Caribbean Financial Holdings. I do not have the information, [Interjection] no that has been provided for me officially, I have gotten some numbers unofficially but they would be available elsewhere. I can give you the unofficial numbers that I have. The PE ratio: 2006 – 4.12%; 2009 – 14.13%; 2010-35.5%. I do not have the dividend pay out.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Member you ...

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK:** Mr. Speaker, to the extent that the Prime Minister is pressed for time and in fairness to him, question (d) was not answered properly or it was misinterpreted and I am assuming ...

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

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK:** The (d) was a genuine misinterpretation.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** What is the current market share?

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK:** What percentage of the market is controlled by the bank that is basically what I am asking? I know at one time NCB did about 40% of the market. I wanted to know whether it was still on or around that figure, up, down cross about.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Well, what I give, I give you the figures.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK:** No! That is not what was provided.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** I gave you the figures [inaudible]

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** The next question would be No. 11 then. Question No. 11 Honourable Member for West Kingstown.

11. *The Honourable Daniel Cummings Representative of West Kingstown asked the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance:*

*Would the Honourable Prime Minister please state:-*

- a. The exact terms and conditions under which the car park in Kingstown built by the Chamber of Industry and Commerce was granted to a private business entity to manage;*
- b. Was there a requirement to submit audited financial statements and if so where were those audited financial statements submitted; and*
- c. In the event that the answers to question (b) are in the affirmative, would the statements be made public and/or tabled in this Honourable House?*

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Prime Minister, Minister of Finance.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, I would provide some information but I will just remind my Honourable Friend

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

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Well, he is also my Honourable Friend, the Honourable Member [interjection] [laughter] yes, well you know everyone is my friend and everyone is my neighbour.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Sorry, it is my intervention.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Everyone is my friend and everyone is my neighbour that is where I have reached in my life. Mr. Speaker, as you are aware the rules indicate that if you have a public document in this case an agreement which is registered you should not ask me for this information. I have been advised that the number is 4182 of 2010: the Agreement between the Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines and the entity known as Solidarity Inc. and the lease is for a period of ten years. It commenced on the first day of October, 2010 at a consideration at a yearly lease of \$50,000 (fifty thousand). Mr. Speaker, may I just say this, I want to give another document because I always like comparisons to be made. There is also a lease 696 of 1998 the land on which Cable and Wireless building stands; a lot of people do not know this. It is not owned by Cable and Wireless you know, it is owned by the Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines. They got a lease for this building for twenty years, I always like to make comparisons particularly I am a man I defend the poor, the working people, the trade unions and the farmers. The then government in 1998 on the 19th February leased this property, the Cable and Wireless land, up here [interjection] yes! Cable and Wireless which is here where they have their headquarters the first ten years they will pay \$2,000 for the whole year, for the next twenty years they will pay \$4,000 a year so that for twenty years they will pay \$20 and \$40 \$60,000.

The workers and farmers are paying \$50,000 a year over there, I just want to say that under this, under the Cable and Wireless lease they have a ten year option after the twenty year as it says: at a rent ... the rent will be based on the current value of the premises. Now, since 2008 we have not collected one cent because we have not had an agreement as to how much it would be. Now, you know if a lease comes to an end under the law of this country and there is no payment for anything further and no continuation the building which is also on it belongs to the lessee. I do not ...when everybody wants to do things with government and to treat government as if it is an NGO, I haven't said anything about this and I only said something about this now because this question is being raised. Chamber had it for ten years and I cannot remember anybody raising any questions in public about it over there. And I noticed the question says it was granted to a private business entity to manage, well, the Chamber of Industry & Commerce is a private entity also, they had it for ten years; the business people had it for ten years, what is the problem with the workers and farmers having it for ten years? [Knocking the desk] I do not see a problem with that at all and they had to pay \$50,000 a year, we are not giving them at a peppercorn rent, what Cable and Wireless got there is practically a peppercorn.

So, the point about, it Mr. Speaker, I know when I am making a point which the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown likes.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK:** Yes.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** He likes the point that I am making but because the clarity of the point offends his politics

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK:** Now, you just linger, lingering over there, go eat your food and come back.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Because it offends his politics, Mr. Speaker, because it offends his politics the point is this I must say this

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK:** Forward.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** I must say this, Mr. Speaker,

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK:** Forward.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, it is true

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

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** that the Chamber of Industry and Commerce had done preparations on the site but the National Labour Congress and WINFARM who constitute the two principal entities for Solidarity Incorporated that they had to do a number of repairs. The place was – let me not even go into that that is for another occasion. I just want to say that this is a private entity; I do not have to see their Balance Sheet, there is nothing in the Agreement which says I must see their audited statements, and I never heard of audited statements of a private company to be laid in the House. Anybody will be able to see them at

SCIPO office, the company registry for any company. Why is it that we must look into the business of Solidarity Inc. to have it laid in the House? Are we going to change the laws, the Company Laws? If I want to see it I will go up there and I will pay if it is a dollar, two dollars whatever it is now to see company records. I understand there is a first year's business: the first year's account is currently being audited I am told that and that they have on the cards distribution of dividends.

I know the workers who are there are much better paid than those before and I know that the office was trashed upon the demitting of the previous lessee when these new lessee took over. I am not on mars, I know some of the politics which are behind and apparently innocuous looking questions and that is why I put the context to this in every material particular. I am obliged.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** We move to question No. 13 in this context, is that yours Honourable?

**HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS:** Thank you very much. I rise to ask question No. 13 standing

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Oh! Oh!

**HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS:** in the name of the Honourable Anesia Baptiste,

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Okay.

**HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS:** who is out of the country.

13. *Honourable Daniel Cummings Representative of West Kingstown asked the Honourable Prime Minister on behalf of Anesia Baptiste:*

*In September 2011, the House passed the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act Part V Section 34, of which mandates the establishment of the National Task Force against Trafficking in Persons; will the Honourable Minister please state;*

*What functions of the Task Force have been carried out to date?*

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Prime Minister, this question is for you.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** I am obliged. Mr. Speaker, may I just indicate that this matter though it touches and concerns social development, I am the Chairman of the Task Force and that had come through during the time we had discussed the Bill and so forth.

Mr. Speaker, one of the Result Indicators under the Ministry of National Security is that it is proposed to establish a unit to deal with domestic violence and child abuse in keeping with the 2011 Act: the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act. The Unit has been established at the Questelles Police Station and is staffed currently with two persons, initially. It is to be officially launched next month when the second in a series of training by the International Organisation of Migration (IOM) will be conducted.

The second of a series of training by IOM will be delivered to twenty five officials in the form of train the trainers programme from the 11<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup> April, 2012. A third will be conducted in May to June 2012. Ms. Chissey Muoeller of the IOM held a briefing with the Task Force on the 24<sup>th</sup> of January, 2012 and I had a very long briefing with her individually also. Following the initial training that was conducted at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Conference Room on the 23rd-25<sup>th</sup> January a report along with recommendations were submitted and I do have in my possession that report and recommendations. The Unit is presently examining the recommendations for implementation; in keeping with the 2011 Act the first quarterly report from the Unit is due on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012. Once the Unit is fully established the various functions as outlined in the Act will be operationalised.

To give an indication of the sort of person who we will be training in the next training session, from the police department: 1 Superintendent; 4 Assistant Superintendents including Assistant Superintendent Ruth Jacobs and Kamisha Blake and a Sergeant; 2 persons from the Labour Department; 3 from the Immigration Department; 2 persons from the DPP's Office, the Chief of Police; 5 or so persons through the Ministry of National Mobilisation including someone from VINSAVE; someone from the National Worker's Movement; officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; officials from the Ministry of Health; National Commission on Crime Prevention; and from the general administration in the Ministry of National Security and the [inaudible] The Honourable Members would see that the Minister of National Security is taking this particular exercise very seriously in my role as Chairman of this body for us to get it on the road properly [inaudible] I am very grateful for the question to be able to give the report on this particular one. I am obliged.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** All right then, we will move back then to question No. 6, Honourable Member for the Northern Grenadines.

6. *Dr. the Honourable Godwin Friday Representative of Northern Grenadines asked the Honourable Minister of Agriculture:*

- a. *Did the European Union (EU) inspectors visit the fisheries centers in St Vincent and the Grenadines in 2012;*
- b. *Which centres were inspected during the visit; and*
- c. *What was the outcome of the inspection, particularly with regards to our ability to export seafood to EU markets?*

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

**HONOURABLE SABOTO CAESAR:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the European Union has not made a visit to the Fisheries Centres in St Vincent and the Grenadines in 2012. The Ministry has done its part in requesting for 2012 an inspection by the EU Food and Veterinary Office; however a mission to St Vincent and the Grenadines by the EU inspectorate has not yet been scheduled. I am obliged, Mr. Speaker.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Question No. 7, Honourable Members for Central Kingstown.

7. *The Honourable St Clair Leacock Representative of Central Kingstown asked the Honourable Minister of Trade:*

- a. how much scrap iron was exported in 2011 and for the first two months of 2012;*
- b. are the records of these exports disaggregated and if so what are the quantities and dollar volume; and*
- c. how important in this industry and what are the government's plans for it?*

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Minister of Trade and Foreign Affairs.

**HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER:** Thank you. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member said that it is a simple question but I am not too sure if it is that simple because I am a little ... I do not know if it is my scientific background but I wish to suggest that the question be corrected to speak of scrap metals because if I were to stick to answer the question as my Honourable Colleague, the Honourable Representative of West Kingstown ... [I saw him chuckling] it could give a different answer. The technocrats [Interjection] yea! But if you ask for iron, fortunately the technocrats gave some of both, but I am just saying it is not as simple as you may think.

Okay, Mr. Speaker, the response from the technocrats is that there were 3,663,640 kilograms of scrap: they said iron but scrap metal was exported in 2011. I did some calculations because just to explain why I started that way is that you have here: scrap cast iron, stainless steel, you have aluminum and you have copper, which is not iron, so you understand now, I was not being frivolous. [Interjection]

**HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER:** Ah! Well you see, in fact, I have a question disaggregation in what, monthly or in composition, so you see why it is not so simple. [Interjection] Yea! If I stick to your question it is not as simple at all Ah! So, in terms of the disaggregation I assume that it is what you are saying now. And yes the aggregation part (b) yes the records are disaggregated in this case in composition: scrap metal and there is a long table. It would have been better to provide this answer in writing because to describe a table is not as simple. We have [interjection] what? [Laughs] yes! [Interjection] waste and scrap cast iron we have 1.5 million kilograms at a dollar value of EC\$530,000 that is for the year 2011. Waste and scrap stainless steel 99,000 kilograms EC\$32,000; I am rounding off some figures. Waste and scrap of alloy steel other than stainless steel and this is just over 1 million kilograms at EC\$872,000; waste and scrap of tin iron and steel 347,000 kilograms at about EC\$124,000; non ferrous waste, ferrous meaning waste other than iron and scrap not elsewhere specified is included 15,000 kilos at \$46,000; copper waste and scrap and this is really the most valuable one, 13,000 kilograms at EC\$238,000. And aluminum waste and scrap 49,000 kilograms at EC\$104,000. The total value for 2011 was \$1.946 million for the over 3 million kilograms.

I think it is important to note the value in terms of ... let me answer the other part for January there was 40,000 kilograms of cast iron at EC\$11,000; 48,000 alloy stainless steel at EC\$53,000; there was no scrap stainless steel exported or recorded or tin iron, nor copper, nor aluminum; 15,000 of the other ferrous waste at EC\$46,000 and to sum total of 103,000 kilograms at EC\$110,489.00. You understand what I am saying, it is a lot of figures and it would have been useful if ... Just to give you an idea, it turns out, I did some calculations, and the copper the most valuable one comes out to about EC\$18.00 per kilogram, whereas iron is just about \$0.50 per kilogram, and this has some significance to certain industry that use copper, okay, all right.

The answer to part (c) of the question which is how important is this industry, and what are the government's plan for it? How important? I think all industries are important once you find the proper niche. The figures if you want to put the importance relative to the earning ability, well you have the figures, and you can determine that. "And what is the government's plan for"? I chuckled when I read that it, I said that I expected my Honourable Colleague the one who is very much interested in the development of the private sector, I was wondering why should there be any significant concern about the government being involved in this, we can set policies and we have done so. I would like to suggest that the private sector is involved in this, so too is state enterprise: the CWSA; but I think this is an area that we should best leave to the private sector [interjection] Eh! Well, if the private sector wants to take – I did not say that; I said if the private sector ... is an area where the private sector should find opportunities and we have no objections to the private sector exploiting these areas, if they are not taking up the slack and the CWSA finds it prudent in the interest of environmental protection, I think that we have to give credit to the CWSA which apparently is doing it.

[Interjection] I really do not know all of the details available but one of the things of the management of scrap metals is the economies of scale and for us to get seriously into this, it is a very intriguing feasibility study one has to do because to invest significantly in crusher plant and that in one run, you might clean up the whole country and the sustainability would be questionable and I am certain that that would be supported by the Honourable Member of West Kingstown. Much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary question.

### **SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK:** Mr. Speaker, I have been listening to the Minister of Trade and I know the Minister of Agriculture was a little occupied when I was raising it. We learned earlier today that he indicated that we have not sent any bananas to England for the last several weeks. Is the Honourable Minister of Trade now acknowledging that the export of scrap iron, scrap metal is now [more] important to the economy of St Vincent and the Grenadines than is the banana industry. [Laughter] that is my question [interjection] is it a fact that our export of scrap iron and scrap metal now surpass the export of bananas, sorry, to England is that a fact? That is the question.

**HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER:** I have not done an analysis of the whole export of bananas and scrap iron. You are taking a point instead of a global view of this whole thing, come on [interjection] Ah! I did not suggest that nor would I do so.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** [Striking gavel] Honourable Member, is the question seeking an opinion, then it cannot be answered.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** That is the other thing, [laughter] thank you.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Question No. 9.

9. *The Honourable Daniel Cummings Representative of West Kingstown asked the Honourable Minister of Agriculture:*

*The public car park in Kingstown that was constructed by the Chamber of Industry and Commerce has been managed by a private entity for more than one year now. Would the Honourable Minister please state:-*

- a. in what ways have farmers benefited from this change in management;*
- b. what specific group or groups of farmers in which community have so far benefited; and*
- c. what has been the total financial contribution to agriculture and/or farmers from this private company to date?*

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

**HONOURABLE SABOTO CAESAR:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I am indeed grateful for this question, I know that the Honourable Prime Minister would have answered a lot of issues coming out of the car park when he answered his question. Mr. Speaker, in October 2010, the joined company Solidarity Inc. received a contract to manage the car park previously managed by the Chamber of Industry and Commerce at a monthly lease of \$50,000, annually sorry, Mr. Speaker. When the car park was taken over by Solidarity Inc substantial repairs had to be done to the washroom, fence and to the parking lot at the expense of the new lessee. In less than two years however, under the new management by Solidarity Inc the following persons and organisations have benefitted, and Mr. Speaker, please allow me, the list is a bit long but I have to go through them and I would itemize them because the question has asked for me to disaggregate the contribution according to Farmers Organisation, Workers Organisation and Communities and I have to go through them.

On May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2011 the Carnival Development Corporation received part sponsorship for Junior Pan 2011 in the tune of \$5,000. Well, there are children who are part of these groups whose parents are farmers. You see, secondly, Mr. Speaker, on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011 the National Workers Movement Support received \$5,000, the same June 6<sup>th</sup>, WINFARM Support in the sum of \$5,000, the same 6<sup>th</sup> June, 2011 SVG Teacher's Union Support \$3,000; on the 27<sup>th</sup> July, 2011 SVG athletes to go to the ALBA games and I know that some of those athletes were children of farmers \$2,032; Tamara Lowman on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011 received an Education Bursary; Ricky Byron on the 3<sup>rd</sup> August, an Education Bursary, also so did Britney Cropper, Valrine Franklyn, Valisa Browne and Zachary Glasgow they all received Education Bursaries. On November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011 the Society of and for the Blind received \$300; the St. Vincent and the Grenadines National Women's Rugby Team to travel received assistance in the tune of \$500; the National Council of Women, I am certain that they are farmers, on the

National Council of Women [laughter] you could laugh you know, the farmers out there in South Central Windward and the farmers in North Leeward and the farmers in North Windward are listening and the Southern Grenadines. It was the same thing when hurricane Tomas struck and the Prime Minister give an estimation of the negative impact of hurricane Tomas on agriculture in this country, Members in this very parliament said that the Honourable Prime Minister overstated the negative impact that hurricane Tomas [applause] had on agriculture and you have the audacity to come and ask in this very parliament, knowing the impact that it had on the production and productivity on bananas as to whether or not we could export bananas to Europe and men taking it as jokes. Men taking it as jokes, but I am the son of a banana farmer and I cannot change that history and is banana farming which make Saboto Caesar the person he is today [applause] you cannot change that.

Mr. Speaker, on February 2<sup>nd</sup> Care SVG \$200; Heart Beat Drummers a donation of \$400; Elite Steel Orchestra via the Pan Against Crime \$5,000; and Angeline Caesar, I must state for the public, I have no personal relation that I know of to Angeline Caesar, for medical assistance, she is expected to have surgery in Trinidad and Tobago tomorrow in the sum of \$3,500. Mr. Speaker, SVG Solidarity Car Parks has been in solidarity with all. The poor and working class people of this country [applause] and when I took the Oath of office, I took the Oath to represent and defend the poor and working class and every single Vincentian, but I have a particular interest to defend the poor and vulnerable.

Mr. Speaker, all the students who received the bursaries and I want persons to listen to this very carefully, all the students who received the bursaries their homes were affected by the flood last year [applause] a total support to WINFA which is a farmers organization WINFA, if it was not for WINFA and Fair Trade we would not have had bananas going to Europe, to UK today. The hard work of WINFA and Fair Trade spans the length and breadth of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Every single community, every single farmer and they received support in the sum of \$30,000. Mr. Speaker, I am obliged [applause].

## **SUPPLEMENTARY**

**HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS:** Mr. Speaker, I heard the Honourable Minister speak of \$5,000 to WINFA up front and then he reached to \$30,000 I am not sure where that came from, but the question supplementary question, has any of this money been used to help to get rid of the problems in the Banana Industry like the Moko and black leaf spots?

**HONOURABLE SABOTO CAESAR:** Mr. Speaker, this question it is very intriguing that the Member would ask this question, because if one fully understands and appreciates the role of WINFA in the whole banana set up, it goes without saying that since the industry has been affected by the Moko and black leaf spots diseases WINFA and Fair Trade they would have played an integral role working with the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and particularly the banana unit to seek to bring redress to the problems that we are facing as it pertains to these two diseases and the answer is simply, yes. It is so interwoven to try to disaggregate the support that WINFA would have given to the process. In any attempt to disaggregate it is really an exercise in futility. WINFA is the process, WINFA, Fair Trade, SVG Producers, all of us. Even the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, I must commend him, he has done excellent work in the de-leafing process in his field [applause] I am keeping very close eyes. When I mentioned it..., on a lighter note, Mr. Speaker, on a lighter note when I gave the commendation in South Central about his field, I was told on the block I should not be

commending the Member, I should be commending his wife who is an excellent farmer. Mr. Speaker, I am obliged [laughter].

**HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS:** His field looking good man.

**HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS:** I rise on Standing Order 20(a), Mr. Speaker, I will read it. It says;

“The proper object of a question is to obtain information on a question of fact within official cognizance of the Minister to whom it is addressed or the Attorney General, or to ask for their official action.”

Mr. Speaker, I know you have vetted questions and you are vetting questions coming to this Honourable House, but I find that the object of the question No. 9 and the object of question 11 far removed from the intention of the Standing Orders.

Mr. Speaker, the Chamber of Industry and Commerce is also a privately owned organisation, no different to the organisation that presently runs this car park. They had run it for years, paying executives salaries, substantial executive salaries to run a care park. Nobody has found it convenient and there was no object and intention at the time to bring a question to this Parliament to ask, how much the Chamber of Commerce make, who they give, what are their expenses, but because the poor people of this country, a private sector organisation has taken on the car park to run it for the benefit of farmers and trade unions, the NDP is asking a question in this Parliament as to the inside of private business [applause] Mr. Speaker, this is not public affair you know, this is private business and the object of this question is far removed from the intention of the rules of parliament [applause].

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** All right Minister, I know..., Honourable Member, I am not going to entertain any more discussion on this.

**HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS:** Mr. Speaker, having allowed that motion, you have to allow me the opportunity to respond.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** No, I do not have to allow anything.

**HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS:** But Mr. Speaker, in the interest of justice, having allowed that intervention.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** I said, would you please..., a Member moved on a point of order.

**HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS:** That is a motion.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** The Member moved on a point of order...,

**HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Name yours

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Just a minute, I mean all of you want to speak, well come, I will get up. I will suspend this thing and let all of you...,

**HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Name the rule.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** It seems so. Listen, the Member moved...

**HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** We wasting time.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Yes, we are wasting time. The Member moved on a point of order, I have a right to speak on that issue and until I do so nobody else can so speak on the matter before I do and I was about to say to the Member, I take note of your point of order that is what I want to say to you. I do not know what other debate could be coming out of this issue; I do not know what other debate. Question No. 10

**HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, question No. 10 is to the Minister of Transport and Works.

10. *The Honourable Daniel Cummings (West Kingstown), asked the Honourable Minister of Transport and Works:*

*Given its importance to the tourism product, would the Honourable Minister please state what is the status of the project to replace/upgrade the bridge leading to Fort Charlotte, and how soon can this work be expected to move to the construction phase.*

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

**HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS:** thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Honourable House would know and the Honourable Member would know there is no allocation in 2012 for Fort Charlotte Bridge. I can only have power if it is [interjection] no, no, no, no, you would not want another supplementary estimate just for political purposes, so I am telling you there is no money inside of the estimates for Fort Charlotte Bridge.

Mr. Speaker, this subject is one that there is a lot of interest in it. The Chief Engineer and the Ministry are of the view that we should build a parallel bridge, to build another bridge and repair this bridge because of its historical importance. I am of a different view, Mr. Speaker, as the Minister I believe a modern day bridge structure next to this beautiful structure that we have there that could be repaired will detract from the value and aesthetics of the whole bridge. I believe that we should proceed with professional advice on what we call the draw bridge; it is never a drawbridge and makes it even more unique by continuing a limitation of weight on that bridge. In other words, make it the more unique tourism project that there could be a cart. There could be something on the other side of the bridge to take them up to Fort Charlotte in a more touristic style (if I could use that word) that is my view on it. So that I am not with the engineers in the Ministry on this matter of building a new bridge and I believe that is why it did not appear in the estimates, because we had our discussions on it.

I want to say however, that Louise Mitchell has been very effective and involved in this through the National Trust and they have in fact submitted to the Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation through the United States Embassy for funding for the renewal, rebuilding, restructuring of not just the bridge, but the entire Fort

Charlotte. In fact, their budget, I have two big documents from Louise and it has my support with a letter as Minister of Transport supporting their approach and in fact, I said to them in the letter, this structure has caused many a discussion within this Ministry and I am happy that you have taken an initiative which I believe could be implemented and completed long before the proposed plans of the Ministry and that shows how strongly I feel about it. So I am not in favour of this parallel bridge that we want to build. Right now the weight on that bridge is limited to 4 tons and the National Trust has gotten an opinion, in fact, the report is written by one Andrew Lawrence PRMS Ltd. with special consultation by Tim Meek with an M.A. as a specialist line structure engineer in Scotland and they have the advice. In fact, he says that this bridge was built and with proper maintenance and restoration now is similar to bridges in Europe that has been there for thousands of years and the lifespan of this bridge could be included in that category because of its structure, fantastic structure.

Mr. Speaker, we lost two in Kingstown, sometimes I am referred to as the Philistine in the old matter of aesthetics and architecture and old buildings and so on, but we lost two bridges in Kingstown which was unfortunate Back Street and Bay Street on the South River. When we took office, Edmond John was rebuilding the one on Back street and when I just took over, hence the nomenclature for me as “the bridge over troubled waters”, we had to rebuild something out of all concrete on Bay Street and two beautiful arch bridges got destroyed in the process. I do not think we should extend this to Fort Charlotte.

In fact, if you go to Cane Garden Mr. Speaker, on a clear day and look straight across you would see the entire formation of that bridge in between those two hills, a beautiful sight for sore eyes, and I am not one of those romantic types who would describe these things like that, but I must admit that it is a beautiful structure and very picturesque. So I see it as an entire project and I believe in the meantime while there may be some inconveniences that we will proceed. In fact, the budget for this is over \$1 million prepared by the National Trust and I believe of that about US\$100,000 is earmarked for the restoration of that bridge and thereafter the National Trust and the Ministry of Tourism will design something to live with that bridge and keep it as a national monument. Thank you.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** The question then would be No.12

12. *Honourable Anesia Baptiste (Opposition Senator), asked the Minister of Social Development:*

*Would the Honourable Minister please indicate*

- a. Whether the long awaited Crisis Centre is now operationalised; and*
- b. If not, how soon can Vincentians expect it to be in operation.*

**HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON:** Much obliged, Mr. Speaker. I note the words “long awaited” on the Honourable Senator’s question, but nothing happens before its time, Mr. Speaker, everything takes a little time. Sometimes the things that we wish for are not always necessary the things that we should get, but Mr. Speaker, I want to state very clearly that the Government and by extension the Ministry of National Mobilisation is resolved in operationalising the Crisis Centre and has been working assiduously to realise this very important goal.

A lot of work has been put into it over the years in seeing this very important facility and if I daresay, this new institution comes to fruition. It is my Ministry's intention that this facility/institution would provide a meaningful place to care for persons who from time to time would be in need of help and a caring spirit.

The staff for the centre is now in place, Mr. Speaker, and has been receiving training. It is a new institution for us and part of this training will include a study tour to neighbouring St. Lucia within the next week and a half or so to observe the operation of the Crisis Centre and the Women Support Centre in St. Lucia. My Ministry is currently making those arrangements. Also Mr. Speaker, further internal and external enhancement work have just been completed. I want to say that it is the intention of the Ministry that the Crisis Centre would commence its work or its operation by the 16<sup>th</sup> April, 2012. I am much obliged.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Question No. 14 the final question.

14. *Honourable Aneisa Baptiste (Opposition Senator) asked the Honourable Minister of Social Development:*

*Would the Honourable Minister please state clearly what are the current training and development programmes carried out at the Liberty Lodge Boys' Training Centre.*

**HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON:** Much obliged, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, the Liberty Lodge Boys' Training Centre provides a caring environment in which boys between the ages of 7 to 16 years of age who are disadvantaged having familial educational, emotional or behavioural difficulties can acquire skills that will enable them to become more responsible and productive citizens in our blessed land.

Some of the programmes offer at the facility, the centre engages the resident boys in an organised programme of training and development activities as follows:

- (a) Participation in the formal education system, means the boys attend school regularly and participate normally in class activities.
- (b) Participate in skills training such as computer, music, woodwork, art, craft.
- (c) Participate in counseling and workshop sessions and building self esteem, human rights, understanding the adolescent human growth and development, conflict management and conflict resolution.
- (d) Participate in various sporting activities such as football and lawn tennis.
- (e) Participate in the ganar Training Programme and ganar is the Spanish word, meaning to win; it elaborates the concept of using sports as a vehicle for both social and economic development of the youth. This programme was executed in collaboration with United States Agency and partners of America.
- (f) Participating in agricultural and poultry farming activities, the centre receives good cooperation and support from the Ministry of Education in this respect.

(g) Participate in social activities such as friendly, competitive sports and Christmas Parties.

(h) All students at the centre receive regular, medical examination.

Mr. Speaker, other programmes offered by the Liberty Lodge Boys' Training Centre includes parenting education programme. The parents of Boys are also targeted through the division's programme to enable them to give better support to their sons. These parents participated in training sessions in various aspects of the parenting education programme. Both the resident boys and their parents participated in social outreach in the community. Training for the staff, it is important to note that staff training and development is important, provide staff training through seminars and workshops, also through exposure to tertiary education and other experiences, four staff members are benefiting from in-house training, four persons are benefiting from tertiary education. Enhancement of the physical structure, we have to do some work on the centre.

For the financial assistance from the Republic of China on Taiwan, the Government will effect some refurbishing work at the centre later on in this year. The work will include replacement of the roof of the administrative building and construction of a new kitchen and dinning room areas. This project will enhance the working and learning environment at the centre and it is expected that the staff, the resident boys and their families will also benefit directly.

Mr. Speaker, you would notice that the Ministry is working systematically to modernise both infrastructure and the programme for the centre in keeping with best practice for the children in the institution as proposed by international standards. I am obliged.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** This brings us to the end of question time.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Mr. Speaker, I crave your indulgence on the question time, Mr. Speaker, in the question that I had presented in a House was ruled to be, of excessive length by yourself, Mr. Speaker and I thought of the very minimum you could have provided an opportunity for the question to be shortened rather than have it pull out all together and to the extent that the question involved an important subject as electricity and the cost of electricity specifically the surcharge, it is a matter that the parliament should probably address and that is why I brought it to the attention because it is the pricing regime in place now for 40 years that clearly has outgrown its usefulness and I asked the question so that I could come to the assistance of consumers in St. Vincent and the Grenadines using the parliament as an important media and I thought that I could have at the minimum be given a chance to have shorten that question bearing in mind it is not shorter than questions that I have been here before by Members on the other side and I just want to bring that to your attention because I have to carry that debate now in the public.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you very much sir.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Thank you very much.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Before you go though I must respond. I do not slight these issues like that. When I saw the question I went to the office of the Clerk of the House and I even asked her opinion on the question. She agreed with me. I said would you kindly communicate to the Honourable Member and ask him to modify the question in some way or the other. The next thing I know when I went back, I say, did you hear,

because I assumed that was carried out, I have no other reason but to assumed it was carried out, did you hear from the Honourable Member, she said no, he has not responded. I therefore ruled that since he has not responded that the question should not go on the Order Paper. So I do not make those kinds of judgement. I am sorry, thank you very much.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Mr. Speaker...

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** I am not going to argue please.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** I am not going to argue but I am grateful for your clarification.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Right.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** But I am saying to you that opportunity was not provided for me. In fact, it is still here on my BlackBerry, it was an information that the question will not be allowed, not asked to modified, changed or whether.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** I asked that it be modified.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** So we have a clearer understanding now.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** I asked that it be modified.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** So I will now take it to the public.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you very much.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Thank you.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** I do not deal with issues like that, it is serious business there.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Well I will take it to the public.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Well it is up to you.

**HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL:** Mr. Speaker, out of an abundance of caution, I beg to move that the proceedings of today's Sitting be exempted from the provisions of the Standing Orders hours of sitting in accordance with section 12(5).

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

**HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL:** Mr. Speaker, it seems that it is a good time for us to take the break; I do move that this meeting be suspended until 4 O'clock.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Mr. Speaker, today is the day when Private Members Bills are before the House I am asking whether or not a shortened lunch break would not have accommodated that privilege to which we on this side should be allowed.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** You want me to put the question to the vote? Well let me put the question to the vote, because I cannot..., if a motion is moved, I cannot just change it.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**House suspended at 2:00 p.m. until**

**4:00 p.m. (Luncheon)**

**House Resumed at 4:06 p. m.**

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS  
MOTIONS**

**1. Motion on Private Sector Development**

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Senator Browne. I wish to indicate to Members that Private Members' Business ceases at 5:00 p.m. this afternoon according to the rules and orders. Honourable Member.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Mr. Speaker, what you talking?

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** You really not letting up on me in Parliament today you know.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** No, [inaudible]

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** You not letting up?

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** No, I am...,

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, I did not make the rules you know and we sit here every year and complain about the same things.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** [inaudible]

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** All right. Could we meet next week Tuesday?

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** [Inaudible] At 8:00 O'clock.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** [Inaudible] Honourable Member, I am sorry about that, I am very sorry.

**HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE:** Motion on Private Sector Development.

**WHEREAS** the private sector has played, and continues to play, a most significant role in the development of the economy of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

**AND WHEREAS** the private sector, in harmonious tandem with the cooperative and State sectors, constitutes the hub of any strategic path for economic development in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

**AND WHEREAS**, the ULP Government has as its established policy and practice of facilitating further private development in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, especially, but not exclusively, for the domestic private sector.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that this Honourable House endorse the ULP Government's policy to further enhance private sector development in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and urge the Government to engage the private sector fully in this quest on an on-going basis.

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

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Could I have a seconder to the motion.

**HONOURABLE ELVIS CHARLES:** I did second...

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Well I need to hear you. All right the Motion having been moved and seconded are now up for debate, Honourable mover of the Motion.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to rise through you Mr. Speaker, the **BE IT RESOLVED** section of this Motion and I read for you, **BE IT RESOLVED** that this Honourable House (the House) endorse the ULP Government's policy to further enhance private sector development in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and urge the Government to engage the private sector fully in this quest on an on-going basis. Mr. Speaker, I raised whether out of respect for ourselves anybody really could understand that on this side of the House that we would in fact engage in a debate that will endorse the ULP's position. I mean, it is different if you ask us to endorse the Government's position, I mean there times when they are one and the same, but when definitions and we speak about a ULP Government's position it means we are just going to waste the business of the House because it is just not going to happen and I wonder the wisdom and the efficacy of using the time to really carry the nation's business forward whether this does not degenerate to the level of trivia. I put it out for consideration.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Well I understand what you are saying, Honourable Member but...

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Thanks for your understanding.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** But you know with these things...

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Your hands are tied.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Well if you want to use that term. Honourable could you please continue?

**HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, Motion on Private Sector Development under the Unity Labour Party Government. The private sector, Mr. Speaker, plays a significant

role in the economic growth, employment creation and the full aspect of all Vincentian lives. This Government has a long interest in fostering a business environment that enables the private sector to flourish and to maintain that aspect as an engine of growth.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** And maybe it is for the last time because I really need, Mr. Speaker, on the point of order, Mr. Speaker, for the very opening, Mr. Speaker, of the Honourable Member is this Government, he is a private member and it is namely crystal clear that the presentation is not as a private member, that that his views and expression is that of this Government.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Is not he a part of the Government even as a senator.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** But this is the point I am making, Mr. Speaker.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, you see the thing is, it seems to me that you are seeing this Motion for the first time because I would want to believe that maybe if you had looked at it before and considered it there might have been certain action you might have been able to take but there is nothing that can be done now except for us to debate the Motion and I do not know if the tactics is to delay or you know it is not the tactics is not to delay but we would just have to proceed with what we have. If there is anything that is being said that is un-parliamentary here, I believe and you know I will accept that challenge from you, but at this point in time Honourable Member, we just have to proceed with the Motion. It is only one hour and let us hope it finish soon and then we get back to our regular Order of the Day. Thank you. Honourable Member, go ahead.

**HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE:** Mr. Speaker, thank you. I am sure that the Honourable Member would agree that under this Government there has been tremendous development in the private sector and he can debate for us as well if we have such ample time.

It is important to recognise that the private sector consists of both formal and informal economy. Individuals in households, Mr. Speaker, individuals in households, rich persons, poor persons, people who contribute in aspect of fishing, simple labourers all play a part in the private sector development. When I looked at this Motion first, Mr. Speaker, it was easy for me to see where I can point and where I can connect development in St. Vincent and the Grenadines as established to develop the private sector. We have removed barriers to formalization. It is a brilliant position to be on this side of the House with this Motion here. I understand how the Member feels, but you have to form Government first. These barriers include, Mr. Speaker, administrative hurdles, financial requirements, corruption in public administration and social cultural attitudes. Under the Unity Labour Party Government, we have narrowed those aspects, Mr. Speaker.

The doing business initiative in this country has tremendously improved with this Government in power. Invest SVG, CED, FIU, Mr. Speaker, all have contributed and still continue to contribute to the development of the private sector. Let us take Buccama on the Bay, massive project, private investors, facilitation by Invest SVG along with other companies, Bequia Beach Resort, Petit St. Vincent Resort, and the Armajaro Project all bring from the office of Invest SVG. SEDU Mr. Speaker that has contributed to small business development in training in all areas, market location and other assistances.

The aspect of starting a business, Mr. Speaker, seeking employment, registration of property and getting credit is becoming easier and easier under the Unity Labour Party Government. Mr. Speaker, simple procedures mean shorter way, lower costs benefit for all in the private sector. We have encouraged a policy in quotation marks of competition. It is not written on stone, but there is a competition policy that is encouraged by this Government. Competitive markets are not only effective, Mr. Speaker, in this modern context of our life, but they are needed. When resources are limited in certain areas, it is essential, Mr. Speaker, for a market to expand and encourage competition, a culture of competition promoted by the Unity Labour Party facilitate well functioning markets. Competition will lower cost in doing business, stem anti competitive practices in the economy, strong market economy driven by low competition is the way to go and is the way the Unity Labour Party continues to go.

Several areas, Mr. Speaker, communication, LIME, DIGICEL, fast food outlets, subway, KFC and much more, department stores, supermarkets, banking and finance, all stem part of the competition policy that has been encouraged by the Unity Labour Party Government. Well some will say we speak differently, we embrace countries like Cuba and Venezuela and we are not an open market. We do not have an open market policy, Mr. Speaker, but our work speaks different.

When firms compete vigorously, we find better ways to distribute goods and services. Consumers benefit from choices, low price, better product etc. Mr. Speaker. Competitive market provides for businesses to work better for the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Mr. Speaker, knowing that there is just only one hour on this Motion and Members both sides of this House would want to share positively on it, I will not take up the entire hour, I will give some for other Members who wish to share. So I will give a synopsis of my document here.

Improvement of the financial sector - Mr. Speaker, this is a critical area of a country's development. This Government has worked along with Central Bank, non-banking financial institutions which include cooperatives, saving banks, credit unions and other persons in the financial market to provide a stable environment where financial development is concerned. We have provided incentives for persons who are getting into business and other investments.

**HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS:** Mr. Speaker, point of order.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** State your point of order, sir.

**HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS:** Mr. Speaker, it just appears to me that the Honourable Member is reading a statement which is contrary to the rules.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** I heard him indicate that he was going to give a synopsis of what he was talking about. I do not know if that means, entails reading excerpts or anything of that sort, but he can clarify that, because under the rules you are not supposed to read his speech. Honourable Member, and the Member is quite correct if that is what you are doing.

**HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE:** Mr. Speaker, just only an hour we have, anyway I will continue.

**HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE:** You have an hour but that does not give us authority to..., so let us stay within the rules.

**HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE:** We have harnessed international linkages, Mr. Speaker, some of these linkages that we have harnessed have been demolished by the Opposition, trashed, destroyed, but we still continue to work hard on behalf of the people of this country. We have encouraged micro financial institutions to operate. We have quick cash, fast cash and many others who have find themselves in a comfortable environment provided by the Unity Labour Party for private sector development to take place [applause]. We have encouraged remittances, you are looking at the institutions that offer these services and expanding, they are going in the Grenadines, they are going outside of the capital, and it is to show, Mr. Speaker, the effort that has been made by this Government to create that market economy syndrome that other persons are saying does not exist with this Government.

We have established the Finance Services Authority, Mr. Speaker. This 11 year old Government has realised that these are modern times and we must work accordingly and work smart, we must work assiduously to encourage persons to invest and to make sure that we keep the financial sector ticking. We have strengthened gender balance and this is one area that I like, Mr. Speaker and I appreciate, the role that we have played in terms of highlighting females in this country and have not debar, hidden, hide in any way or females from progressing. Women have significant entrepreneurial skills, they represent a large portion of our labour force and a lot of ladies in this country are excellent managers.

This Government continues to put on programmes, Mr. Speaker, continue to find ways in which females can be motivated and continue to put laws in place to protect our females. We have given tax concession and sometimes when you look at the figure it is alarming. Approximately 2% of our Gross Domestic Product...,

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Point of Order, state your point of order sir.

**HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS:** The same Point of Order, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member continues to read.

**HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE:** Mr. Speaker, I guess what is happening to the Honourable Member...,

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Just a minute. Honourable Member, let me caution you, please discontinue to read if you are reading because I may have to ask you to discontinue it. So if you are reading, please discontinue.

**HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE:** Mr. Speaker, approximately 2% of our Gross Domestic Product is on tax concession. For last year alone, it is a whopping \$45 million that we have invested in the private sector. Businesses in tourism, in agriculture, persons who are getting involved in construction, vehicles, all persons have benefited from the Unity Labour Party Government under tax concession.

Energy, Mr. Speaker, is another area where the Unity Labour Party would have worked tremendously to benefit the private sector. We have invested, Mr. Speaker, in a new electrical plant in Lowmans Bay. When you check VINLEC accounts, the accounts at VINLEC will tell you that over \$100 million have been spent in the last ten years in expanding its system. Mr. Speaker, VINLEC did not do that for the Government or the public sector as

we will call it, but the expansions were necessary as we realized the growth in the private sector and we must do the necessities to support the growth in the private sector.

Buccama on the Bay, they asked for extra electricity because of the size of the project and VINLEC had to expand. The company plans to spend another \$40 million in renewable energy, something that all of us are well proud about.

Telecommunication, Mr. Speaker, a competitive area in St. Vincent and the Grenadines finally under the Unity Labour Party Government. Prior to this Government, the private sector telecommunication aspect was a monopoly. It had one company in operation that company decides what you pay, how you pay when you pay. That has been reduced because we have encouraged other companies. At one time there were three companies here, now there is Digicel, there is LIME, now it is Karib Cable, perfect environment for competition and for the policies and practices of this Government. We have put a regulatory commission in place allowing persons to get the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, for their voice to be heard in one aspect, if there are any problems, if there are any issues with the company that they are getting their service from, they have the opportunity to work with the regulatory body and get that solved.

When you consider ten years ago what had existed prior to the Unity Labour Party Government Mr. Speaker, you receive your bill you pay, you get bad service you relax and if you vex you just lose your service, but because of the implementation of this commission, the National Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (NTRC) things have changed for the better. Some of these things can go unnoticed if you are not old enough or you do not have the conscience to look back in the past, Mr. Speaker, it is easy to say what is happening in St. Vincent is happening in other Caribbean countries, it is happening across the world, but the truth of the matter is a short 11 years ago none of this existed.

Mr. Speaker, telecommunication is like second nature in St. Vincent and the Grenadines now. We travelled to England recently and while in the hotel we had to prop out close to 30 pounds to use Wi-Fi, in St. Vincent we use it for free, a privilege, Mr. Speaker [applause] a privilege, an excellent privilege, Mr. Speaker. It shows, I mean, we went several places to eat and when you go there you have to get the code so that you can get the Wi-Fi connection, in St. Vincent you sit at the clinics, the police station, the schools, the resource centres and under a bank in Sandy Bay [applause] or even Big Beast in Campden Park a mango tree and get Wi-Fi, watch a Government, Mr. Speaker [applause].

Capacity building is something I want to deal with before I close off and allow other Members to speak on this Motion. And under capacity building lies the Education Revolution, now you cannot be developing the private sector and aiding the private sector in growth without developing the human resources in your country, therefore when the Unity Labour Party decided to launch Education Revolution it was the very best thing to keep us in power for a very long time [applause]. The latest aspect of that both Opposition and Government travelled for training in England [applause]. When I sat with the folks from Commonwealth and I asked them, I said, how come you are targeting St. Vincent and you are making St. Vincent a model country in terms of training, how come you are not doing that to other countries? And the lady said clearly to me, she said, Mr. Speaker, she said, "St. Vincent and the Grenadines has chosen a path different than other Caribbean Governments," [applause]. We are the only Government and I want to say that loud and clear, we are the only Government who has chosen to train its Opposition [applause] watch a Government. You know we..., the lady

said that to me, the lady said one Prime Minister told her, you mad, development to get in government, but we are developing them for them to do the Opposition work very well [applause].

**HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS:** A very misleading statement. The training has nothing to do with the Government per se, it is a Commonwealth fund sponsored thing so to say that the Government is training the Opposition, it is a very erroneous statement and I wish that it be corrected. It is very erroneous.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Did he say the Government training the Opposition?

**HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS:** Yes.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** You sure that is what he said?

**HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE:** Mr. Speaker...

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** No I thought, hold on. Honourable Member, [laughter]. Honourable Member, there is a point of order before the House. I cannot remember..., I mean it is not clear to me that he said that the Government is training the Opposition. I thought..., as a matter of fact I interpret it to be, given the opportunity, I thought [inaudible]. [Interjection] eh? Well maybe he should explain because this is how I think he means it.

**HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE:** Okay, Mr. Speaker, I can clearly explain to the Honourable Member, because I believe he will make the trip one of these days soon. The Commonwealth would have toured the entire Caribbean asking their Government to give them the opportunity to provide training for parliamentarians. St. Vincent and the Grenadines Prime Minister, Dr. Ralph Gonsalves is the only Prime Minister in the region who has accepted to train Parliamentarians totally and not just on one side of the House for training [applause].

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Proceed with your discussion.

**HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE:** Education Revolution as I have said, Mr. Speaker, is the aspect where...

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** I sought..., to be honest with you sometimes (please sit) sometimes arm..., and that is why some of the times I insist that Members quote the section in relation to the Point of Order, because I find sometimes we just make a simple mockery of Point of Order. I mean and things..., we have reached too far, too long in this Parliamentary business to be doing that kind of things. Why we cannot stop fussing about these things.

**HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS:** It is far from what you are implying. The Honourable Member said, this is the only Government that is training Opposition. I am saying that it is an incorrect statement.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** You don't...,

**HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS:** But Mr. Speaker, you are accusing me falsely and it is the second time you are doing it and I take...,

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** I have not...,

**HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS:** Mr. Speaker, if you will permit me. I take very strong objection to you casting aspersions on my character.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** I am not casting aspersion on your character.

**HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS:** Mr. Speaker, in my opinion you did.

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

**HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS:** You did.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, please take the seat. I have not cast aspersions on you. I was speaking in a general term. I was speaking in general terms.

**HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS:** Why after my comment, Mr. Speaker?

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** I was speaking in general terms.

**HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS:** Why did not you say it before Mr. Speaker?

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** I maintain that.

**HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS:** Mr. Speaker, the natural inference is that it is based on what I said and that is casting aspersions on my character and I object to it strongly and vehemently, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS:** It is not the first time you are doing it.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, could you please continue with your debate?

**HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS:** I want to understand something, Mr. Speaker and I think it is fundamental to the point that you made that when we rise on a Point of Order....,

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** I will insist now.

**HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS:** This is what we rise on.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** I will insist now.

**HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS:** That is the point I am trying to make.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Yes.

**HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS:** Standing Orders of the House of Assembly.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** That is the point I am making

**HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS:** Like I did this morning.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Exactly.

**HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS:** I quoted the section on which I want to rise.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** That is the point I am making.

**HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS:** And simply...,

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Because we are using it in almost a frivolous way just to get up and say, I move a Point of Order.

**HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS:** On a Point of Order or elucidation, elucidation, elucidation.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Please sit, please sit. Honourable Member, it was not my intension to cast aspersions on any Member including the Member of West Kingstown. I was just making a [interjection] well, well maybe, okay, well I mean, if I did that I am sorry, but it was not my intention. Let us move on.

**HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS:** The section is No. 35?

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Yes.

**HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS:** No, that is a Standing Order on which you rise on a Point of Order. I am trying to elucidate and educate at the same time, 35 no Member shall interrupt another, must rise on a Point of Order or to elucidate some matter that you have spoken about. Okay, so that is how I interpreted the Speaker's ruling just now.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Let us continue the debate please.

**HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS:** I am saying, quote the Point of Order from the book. So Mr. Speaker, if we can carry the debate a little bit longer, on what rule in the House do you rise on a Point of Order. If the Honourable Member knows it better than 35, because it says ...,

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** 35.

**HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS:** Interruptions.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** 35, 35, 35(1)

**HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS:** If you are trained in law, I am not [laughter]

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** 35(1). Honourable Member, I think the intension here is to delay the whole process.

**HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE:** I honestly believe so Mr. Speaker, honestly.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** I hope I am not casting aspersions.

**HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE:** I believe so Mr. Speaker...,

**HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS:** [Inaudible].

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** I hope I am not casting..., well you are not the only person who has interrupted.

**HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS:** But I have been the predominant one, Mr. Speaker.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** I do not know about that.

**HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS:** You see Mr. Speaker ..., natural inference

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** You put yourself in a place of predominance, I do not know about that, not in my line.

**HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS:** Well let we hope so.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, continue the debate.

**HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE:** Mr. Speaker, I will move on to national security. Fighting crime and corruption and criminality under the Unity Labour Party Government; you would want to believe..., I just heard someone whispered nothing. If the police was using vehicles to fight crime that looks like the Flintstone in those times and there are several, ten years, eleven years have passed and they have improved tremendously faster that could never be nothing. [Interjection] yes you are seeing everything; of course I know the character of the vehicle of Flintstone.

Mr. Speaker, four new police stations were constructed, four were rebuilt and all others were refurbished under the Unity Labour Party Government [applause]. Better salaries, better environment for the police officers to work, making them more comfortable in fighting crime making our society safe, making the private sector safe and better able to do business. Mr. Speaker, when you look at national security and fighting corruption and crime we must applaud this Government for instituting the FIU [applause] not before showed up in any other document or any other party had it in plan or in line, but this Government had realized the need to fight crime this particular way as things have changed modernly. We must realize, Mr. Speaker, in developing the private sector crime must be at a minimal, in developing the private sector, Mr. Speaker, we must seek to find new and innovative ways to reduce our energy consumption. We must continue to improve our telecommunications aspect, concessions to businesses are a must and we will continue to do that. I have seen cases where international organizations asked you to cut back on your tax concessions, but we have not done so, we have continued to do that. We will continue to strengthen the gender balance, Mr. Speaker. We will continue to encourage the financial sector and promote sustainable growth along all lines for financial services.

Mr. Speaker, finally, we will continue to encourage the competition policy and reduce our balance to formalization. Now in closing and in talking about reducing our balance in formalization, Mr. Speaker, it is easy to do business in St. Vincent today than 11 years ago. Businesses are popping up all over St. Vincent without even meeting with the Prime Minister or any other Member of Government. In the past, it was a bit more difficult. In the past what had existed, no proper chain of command in terms of where you go, how you

get it organized, who you pay and it ends up in a bit of informality in terms of receiving Income Tax payment and so forth. Now things are better streamlined.

A business today, Mr. Speaker, when you register your business today it is easy for you to receive a document from the Income Tax stating that they know that you would have registered your business and you could start complying or preparing to comply with your permit. Ten, twelve years ago that did not exist. I will not continue further, Mr. Speaker, because there are other persons who want to join the debate and I encourage all persons who wish to do so. Mr. Speaker, I encourage other Members who wish to continue on the debate to do so at this time. Thank you.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Senator Charles.

**HONOURABLE ELVIS CHARLES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members...

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Members we have only 15 more minutes to debate on this Motion.

**HONOURABLE ELVIS CHARLES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** We close at 5. [Interjection] why? The rules say that. Way the rules say? Read the rules. Let me hear the rules. Read the rules for me and tell me what rule you are reading.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** 22(5) Mr. Speaker.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Eh?

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** 22(5)

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** 22(5). Subject to paragraph (2) of this order, and in paragraph (2) states, "Subject to the provisions of these Standing Orders, Government Business shall have precedence at every meeting of the House except on the first day at the third meeting of any New Session when Private Members' business shall have precedent.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Which is today.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Which is today and (5) says, subject to paragraph (2) of this Order no private member's business may be considered after 5 O' clock at any ordinary sitting of the House and any business not reached shall stand over to the next sitting of Private Member's business entered upon, but not disposed of at that time, shall be deferred until such time as the Speaker may determine.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY:** Right, but what was the phrase in section (5). Subject to subparagraph (2) of this ...,

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** All the subparagraph is saying is that private member takes precedence at this time. Could you please sit and let us move on please.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY:** Mr. Speaker, this is not trivial, this is the rule.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** I know.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY:** I have read it very carefully and I am telling you, you are wrong.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** So have I. Let us move please, Honourable Member.

**HONOURABLE ELVIS CHARLES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to make my contribution to this Motion in this Honourable House. Mr. Speaker, the private sector is that part of the economy, put it this way that is not state controlled, it is run by individuals and institutions for the purpose of making a profit. On the other hand the public sector is composed of companies and other institutions that are controlled by the state. Any smart leader ensures that these sectors work in tandem if development is to take place in a country.

Successful economies are based on a vibrant private sector and it is the objective of the Unity Labour Party to ensure that we have private sector development in St. Vincent that will serve as the engine of economic growth in this country. Mr. Speaker, I made mention before that this Government does things in a systematic way. In developing the private sector there were certain factors that were taken into consideration and certain objectives that this Government wants to achieve such as: job creation and wealth creation, reducing poverty and all of us would agree that successful Government as a hallmark try to reduce poverty in a country to ensure that the citizens develop in every aspect.

Mr. Speaker, when private sector development takes place there is also social cohesion among other factors and we can boast on this side of the House that the ULP Government is a Government for the private sector that seeks to develop the private sector [applause]. I spoke about systematic way of doing things and Mr. Speaker, I am going to just list a few of the institutions that been developed by this Government in order to promote private sector development. I would just like to look briefly at the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Tourism Authority, CED, (the Centre for Enterprise Development), the Input Warehouse Company, Invest SVG etc.

Mr. Speaker, when the ULP Government took office in 2001, significant attention was placed on Agriculture. Mr. Speaker, Agriculture sustains the rural economy. Agriculture is still the largest employer of all the productive sectors outside state administration.

I remember quite well that the banana sector was plagued by a large debt of about \$30 million or so when the ULP took office. Immediately that sector received \$80 million to offset some of that debt along with \$2 million in cash to make sure that that sector moves forward.

Mr. Speaker, the industry was restructured twice because there was an ad hoc way in which things were done and in order to build, you must give any institution a proper base, a proper foundation, you must improve its structure to improve its focus and that was what was done when the ULP took office in order to expand the banana industry. This was not done without proper consultation with the farmers and Mr. Speaker, when the bananas were plagued by Moko and Black Sigatoka, on one occasion they were given up to \$4 million as a form of support. The farmers were given over \$4 million as a form of support to assist them while the banana industry starts moving again from the slump that it had gone into. Even today, I remember after the freak storm when all seemed but lost the ULP Government again give the farmers support until their crop were ready again

to be harvested [applause]. Mr. Speaker, subsidies are provided to the farmers, fertilisers provided at half price so that that industry can boom again.

Since 2001 the Fisheries Division has been given significant attention, has been paid significant attention by the ULP. The Kingstown Fish Market repair work was done, expansion work was done at a cost of about \$16 million. The Owia Fishing Complex was built with about \$33 million, fishermen were given the incentives so that they could borrow money to buy proper fishing equipment and even buy larger vessels where they can go and harvest fish, Mr. Speaker that is attention that is paid to the private sector. So when we talk about attention, there is proof that the ULP Government is a Government that promotes the private sector [applause].

Mr. Speaker, tourism has become a major economic sector in SVG and the ULPs contribution on mainland St. Vincent and in the Grenadines is significant, something that we cannot turn a blind eye to. Again I will like to talk about the systematic way in which things are done on this side. A tourism sector plan was established to deal with the development of tourism, to deal with training, marketing of our destination so that we can improve the tourism products. Mr. Speaker, it would always be my road march song when I talk about development that this Government does stays in order, not in any old ad hoc way, no wonder our results are so significant and people recognise the leader of this party and this party as a whole.

Further relief was given for tourism development. A tourism development credit is now available to investors who are developing tourism properties for sale and Mr. Speaker, I will just like to talk here about stamp duty payable by developers on the initial sale of property. This is a tax credit that would facilitate the new kind of tourism development where developers fail\* the tourism unit and keep them in a managed pool or keep them in a managed pool for ongoing rental whether we are talking here about rooms, suite, and cabanas.

Mr. Speaker, we only have to look at Buccama. Yes, there are other guest houses and there are other hotels that we can talk about, but this is a major institution in St. Vincent, this is a major hotel. Mr. Speaker, it is because of the relief and the incentives that were given to the developers why they have such a marvelous facility in St. Vincent today and we cannot deny that. Mr. Speaker, I was heartened when I listened to the members of the touring Australian team and members of the West Indies team who complemented St. Vincent and the Grenadines in having such a marvellous establishment and in fact, they ranked it among the best that they have used in their time of playing cricket worldwide. Mr. Speaker, we have a marvellous facility here.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to tell you that in 2012 more incentives would be provided for the tourism sector. We must confess that even though the level of development is not as rapid as we hope it would be that we have set certain things in place, the infrastructure is in place so that when we rise from this economic recession, St. Vincent and the Grenadines stands to benefit from the proper ground that was laid in the tourism sector.

Mr. Speaker, in the capital budget of 2012 there is over \$7½ million for the tourism and private sector development project and we would be working in tandem with the European Union who would also contribute funds to the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and we would be building hospitality and a maritime institute in St. Vincent where we would be training people to work in the hospitality industry. Again Mr. Speaker, this is not something that is done in an ad hoc way, if we want the best product we have to provide

the proper training for our human resources and that is what this Government is doing that is what we intent to do why we are working with the European Union in establishing such a facility in this country.

The developers in Canouan, Mayreau, Bequia, Petit St. Vincent and the Union Island, all stand to benefit from the incentives that would be provided by this Government and Mr. Speaker, we can really boast that in 2012 things look bright for St. Vincent and the Grenadines amid this harsh recession, we still continue to invest to ensure that we have economic development in this country. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** I have to interrupt you at this pointing time, time for private member business has expired.

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

### **1. INTERVIEWING OF SUSPECTS FOR SERIOUS CRIMES BILL, 2012**

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, as I have indicated earlier this morning when I laid the report of the Select Committee and the Minutes of the Select Committee, this Bill has had its first reading and the Bill went to the Select Committee and there was a detailed examination of the Bill, not only by Members of the Select Committee, but also by persons from the Bar Association, lawyers and other persons.

Accordingly Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Interviewing of Suspects for Serious Crimes Bill be read a second time so we can proceed with the debate.

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

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a second time.**

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

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, I want to start by thanking all Honourable Members who participated in Select Committee and all the other persons including Mr. Dan Souter who is an advisor in the Eastern Caribbean on a project by the British Government, the distinguished Director of Public Prosecution who is in the strangers gallery this evening, members of the bar including the President of the Bar Association.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill is quite straightforward especially if you are a student of the law, but it has profound implications and I want to set the frame first of all. This Bill is to regulate the law regarding the interviewing of suspects for serious crimes and to do so by electronic means. The interviewing of suspects of any crime is done in accordance with the common law, the judges' rules and the police act. For a short while, Mr. Speaker, the interviewing processes were governed in part by the Police and Criminal Evidence Act of the United Kingdom, PACE which obtained a reception into our law by virtue of a general provision under the evidence act say that wherever there is a law relating to evidential matters in England and Whales that that law would be applicable

to St. Vincent and the Grenadines with the necessary adaptation and that is where the problem arose with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act.

There was great uncertainty particularly since the Everly Thompson case as to what applied, what did not applied, the extent to which various provisions applied and as a consequence there was confusion on certain evidential matters in criminal cases. The police were uncertain, the prosecution they were uncertain, the courts themselves appeared to be uncertain and I would suspect that several different council were also uncertain, but in the state of confusion and uncertainty, several persons who would otherwise have been convicted they were not convicted. In many cases they were..., you had the no case submissions upheld and that could not have been correct. We need to have certainty in the law and we came here and we revoked the application of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act for St. Vincent and the Grenadines and permitted a long standing common law and judges rules and a police act governing the admissibility of statements and to ensure that statements oppressively received, obtained or where there was an involuntariness in relation to the statement that those statements should not form part of the evidence and would be so adjudged by the Judge procedurally on a trial within a trial known in the legal business as *voir dire*.

Mr. Speaker, when we..., Honourable Members may recall, and the public would recall that when we abolished the application of PACE for St. Vincent and the Grenadines from some quarters of the legal profession and from some persons who did quite understand the issues and allowed political partisanship to blind them, they behaved as though heavens were about to fall and the Government was taking away peoples fundamental rights and freedom, nothing was further from the truth. Before PACE citizens individual rights granted to them under the constitution and which were confirmed by the constitution which existed hitherto to the constitution, because the Bill of Rights in the constitution essentially codifies preexisting common law and all the common law and the judges rules and the police act which replicated the judges rules in terms of fairness and admissibility and voluntariness of evidence and you must not have oppressions and so forth and any beating, all the bundle of issues surrounding those matters/statements.

They continued as they were in this country from way back when, because the modern judges' rules came into being, I think in the 1940s, there were preexisting rules, but these were codified in England and came to us after a commission if I remember historically how they came about. But the long standing principles in the judges' rule were already embedded in the common law way back into the 19 century and before, so there was a solid basis for the maintenance of people's individual rights and freedoms and for fair trial and for fairness in the interviewing of suspect, but of course people wanted to play their politics and it was put in short hand, "Ralph want to tek way people rights".

Well you have seen since the abolition of the application of PACE (the Police and Criminal Evidence Act, the United Kingdom) which incidentally has come under intense criticism in the United Kingdom itself by prosecution lawyers and defense lawyers. Anybody who is following the literature will come to that conclusion and since the abolition, we have seen a number of persons walk free, because the judge rule that statements were involuntary, that the statements were taken under conditions of oppression, there are other statements of course where the judges have admitted them and a *voir dire*, on a trial within a trial because they did not take the allegation by the person charged that they were in any way, put in any way any oppressive condition, or their statements were involuntary. So on both sides of the question we found fairness.

What we are doing in this Bill, and Honourable Members would notice that the judges rules and the common law in relation to interviewing suspects, they are maintained, they cautioned and all the rest of it, but we are using modern technology to facilitate the process of fairness to make sure that when an accused person says “I was treated unfairly or I did not say this or I did not say that”, rather than having it a contest between believer ability of the accused person and the police who are present, you can now see in living colour and you can hear what transpired. You can see what transpired and you can hear what transpired and we do that for the serious crimes and Mr. Speaker, what would happen, the interviewing rooms would be equipped with a camera and it would have audio also, persons have been trained and more training will continue. So that if the police were to rough up a man and force a confession out of him, we would have it captured on tape.

And if on the other hand a feller who voluntarily give a confession, whatever statements he makes, if not a confession, it would be seen for what it is that he actually did it on the circumstances under which he did it. So his fairness to the prosecution that means to the society and fairness to the individual accused. So that a number of persons who would have had difficulties as individuals in the court would now no long have these difficulties because it would be buttress and supported by the electronic taping and the interviewing of these suspects and at the same time somebody who is giving evidence in relation to the crime for which they have been charged and if they say something which amounts to evidence against them we would have it on tape and the serious crimes for which this law applies would be the money laundering offences under Part V of the Proceeds of Crime and the Money Laundering Prevention Act, those are serious money laundering offences, drug trafficking offences under the Drug Prevention of Misuse Act in which the quantity of the control drug amounts to in the case of cocaine 1000gms, 1000gms is 1 kilo that is 2.2 pounds or in the case of cannabis 100,000gms which is 220 pounds because just remember you can calculate it however you want, but knowing that 1000g equals 1 kilo or if you want to go it the old fashion way, 28gms equal an ounce, 16 ounces equal a pound, if you want to go that roundabout route. I have to tell it in different ways.

Firearm offences under sections 14, 18 and 19 of the Firearms Act, these are the very serious offences relating to holding, for instance, prohibited weapons, the ownership of prohibited weapons and the like. Murder, manslaughter, rape, kidnapping, armed robbery, treason, offences relating to human trafficking, corruption offences contrary to sections 85 to 87 of the Criminal Code, well there are some offences here in relation to corruption which you may notice may be carrying two and three years whereas some other offences which are of a more serious nature in terms of sentencing on the book, these are put here because if you charge somebody for corruption given the nature of this in the body politic you would consider that a serious offence and let people hear what they say when you questioning them, let the jury hear them. And then of course, conspiring, procuring, counselling, aiding and abetting for attempting to commit an offence listed above.

Mr. Speaker, if we start from the tail end section 13 indicates that..., clause 13 indicates, 13(1)(b) that the Minister by order to amend the first schedule, so this first schedule can be amended that you can add other serious crimes the usual way in which you make that amendment very easily, but the law says that if for any reason the equipment not working or not available you can interview the suspect for these serious crimes in the same old way, you just have to make the relevant notes that the equipment is not working or it is not available.

Further to that you can use the electronic equipment with offences which are not here, but in relation to the offences which are here they are mandatory safe and except for the circumstances like for instance the

equipment not available. I am giving the broad frame first before I come to the section so that Honourable Members who may have read it and not studied it within the context of the preexisting law would have an appreciation and certainly the public, because you know law like everything else is a course of study, as to what Joshua used to repeat what Ares Tata said that law is right reason, lawyers only know these sections in the book and the case law that law is right reason. I heard that..., a number of times I hear Ebenezer Joshua say that, he said that when I was a boy, law is right reason according to Ares Tata, Joshua would add, lawyers only know the sections on the cases [laughter] so once he was possessed of right reason, he was on the way to being a lawyer even though he may not know the cases and the sections. That was good old Ebenezer, a great man.

So Mr. Speaker that is the frame, so if we were to now address..., if I were to take Honourable Members very briefly, clause 1 provides a short title to the Bill and Honourable Members would notice that clause 1(2) the Act shall come into force on a date to be appointed by the Governor General by Proclamation published in the Gazette. The reason why that is so, we have to make sure that we have all the equipment in place, have all the interviewing offices in order and we have to make sure that we have all elements so that we can proceed.

Mr. Speaker, if I may just say this Dan Souter the expert from the United Kingdom says..., you notice he calls it in a speech, I heard him deliver it, it was reported in the press, he calls it “revolutionary” and it is a revolutionary measure from a residential standpoint and he says that it is the first place in the Caribbean that this is going to be done. Apparently other places who have process in place but not..., they have not completed it in the way in which we are doing it, with the law, the equipment, the training, everything.

Clause (2) provides a series of definition and I do not need to go through all of those definitions. Clause (3) the very important point in clause (3) it reads, “whereon any provision of this Act is in conflict with any other law or where the exercise of any power conferred by or under this Act would be inconsistent with the exercise of a power conferred by or any other law, the provisions of this Act shall apply in so far as it so conflicts. So that we are not leaving any ambiguity, we are saying that this law could take precedent and the law outlines all the provisions very carefully.

Consistent with the established rules, indeed, there are many provisions here which are very favourable to the defendant, but overall a very fair piece of legislation. Clause (4) mandates the electronic recording of a custodial interview where a suspect is arrested for serious crimes. Clause (5) provides for the conduct of custodial interview and governs the procedural guidance for the electronic recording of custodial interviews and the procedural guidance is set out in the second scheduled and that is important for Honourable Members to look at but far more important for the police who would have to have this, who have to know this inside out to guide for electronic the guidance for electronic recording of interviews, how you are going to do it, step by step.

Mr. Speaker, if I may just say this parenthetically, one sees the need as we get into this area for police officers who are entering the police force and those who are there to improve their training, because there are many important things which have to be understood and that is why..., you see there are lots of things which connect when in 2007 - 2008 we did the reclassification of the public sector employees including the police and at one fell swoop increased the salary of police officers by 61 percent. Some persons were dismayed. I know persons with A’ Levels who enter in the public service would come to me, they say, “Prime Minister, we have A’ Levels”, a policeman has four O’ Levels or five O’ Levels and he is entering the police force with higher salary than I am entering the public service and my simple response to him, “we are not dealing with your

qualifications, we are dealing with what is the job description and that if you want more money it is perfectly open to you to go and join the police force.”

But as we have seen since then persons are going in with 6, 7, 8 O’ Levels, they are going in with A’ Levels and of course persons with university Degrees more and more want to enter the police force. We have seen one enter at the level of ASP because she had Masters, First Class Honours Degree and then a Masters Degree and we have seen lawyers, persons who studied law, other persons with other qualifications, depending on the qualification they entered at Sergeant/Station Sergeant Level. It is an interesting thing which is happening in the police force.

Of course all these persons with these better qualifications, quote unquote they have to know policing on the ground, not a theoretical issue, better qualifications are to enable you to understand policing better and to be better police officers.

Clause (6) provides that a suspect’s written statement read during a custodial interview must be electronically recorded. Clause (7) addresses the resumption of inadmissibility of a statement made during a custodial interview which is not recorded as required under clause (4). Clause (8) provides that the presumption of admissibility may be rebutted and a statement that is not electronically recorded may be admitted into evidence in the specified proceedings if the court finds primarily that the following conditions have been satisfied, that is to say:

- a) the statement is admissible under the applicable rules of evidence and
- b) there is proof beyond reasonable doubt that the statement was made voluntarily and is reliable and
- c) that if practicable to do so, a law enforcement officer made a contemporaneous record of the reason for not making an electronic recording of the statement.

Clause (9) provides the exception to the general principle regarding the admissibility of a statement that is electronically recorded. The clause stipulates that where the court on its own motion so requires or where a suspect represents to the court that the statement was unfairly obtained the court shall not allow the statement to be given in evidence consequent to the court’s decision the burden of proven otherwise rest on the prosecution.

Clause (10) deals with the rights of the suspect or the suspect’s legal adviser for a copy of the electronic recording of the custodial interview, the period of time within which such copy should be made available and the necessary restrictions with respect to the transcript of the electronic recording. Clause (11) deals with the effects of failure of a suspect during an interview to mention any fact which is later relied on in his defense or a fact which the suspect could reasonably has been expected to mention, having regard to the circumstances existing at the time of the interview. This clause will allow inferences to be drawn from such failure, but introduces the requisite safeguards with respect to legal representation. The provisions of the clause further set out the procedure for taking evidence to establish such failure. Transitional provisions appropriate to a failure which occurred before the commencement of the Act are also contained in the clause.

Clause (12) sanctions the admissibility of custodial interviews in any criminal proceedings. Clause (13) empowers the making of subsidiary legislations, the first scheduled as I have indicated before list the serious crimes to which this Act would apply and the second scheduled as I have mentioned also before provides for the guidance and the procedure for the electronic recording of the interviews and the commencement of the Act, the guidance must be made readily available for consultations by the following persons, law enforcement officers, law enforcement staff, suspected or arrested persons and certainly the lawyers and members of the public.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, that is in a nutshell what this Bill seeks to do. I commend it to this Honourable House and this is part of the process of the continuation of the reformed of the criminal law and procedure in this country to modernize it, to make it fairer, to make it better or the ends of justice. By that we mean that persons who should escape conviction because they are innocent this would strengthen the probability for them to so escape conviction and those who are guilty the regulations, the rules, the laws would record what the facts are for the tribunal of fact and law to make the relevant determination.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to go through here the whole series of measures taken to reform the criminal law and procedure and there are several examples that we have strengthened the criminal justice system, the reforms made in the judiciary, the reforms made in the police force and other reforms which are on the way in all of the respects. Accordingly, I commend this Bill for passage by this Honourable House.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Any further debate on the Bill? Member for Central Kingstown.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Thank you very much for recognizing me, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the summary statement in the presentation we just heard from the Honourable Prime Minister I was reminded of an expression I often heard in our home by my mother in particular, “too much tongue cattle have why e can’t talk.” The older people would explain that to us and its relevance to this legislation may well emerge.

Now, Mr. Speaker, having said that within the last few days, weeks I have been occupied with a thought and the Prime Minister’s presentation and the conduct of the House today in doing the peoples business reminds me of that thought process. It is a simple one, imagine one day (and that is for discussion Mr. Prime Minister) you were to wake up and you found that only you “Ralph”, inverted commas excuse it, was alive on this earth, only you alone was around and you say everything belong to you, well I did choose you, but anyone of us, just imagine that we woke up one day and we found that we were the only person on mother earth [interjection] yes, yes, yes, yes, everything belong to you police, boat, supermarket, house, woman, child, you one, licks, everything belong to you one, I suspect many people would say, “Lord God take away some of them things and send back some people, it is a little rough for me here having all these great things in this world...,”

Mr. Speaker, in our own deliberate wisdom we on this side of the House take the Parliamentary process very, very seriously including the work of Select Committees and ever so often we would participate and more often than not would have a great difficulty in making meaningful intervention or submission to the document before us, because by and large the Government’s mind are either already made up or to concede to an Opposition contribution or intervention may be diminishing in their minds and eyes the quality of the presentation. Be that as it may we participate I think in this last Select Committee, we did so very actively. If you were to go through, Mr. Speaker, the Select Committee Report you would see that by, and large the changes made were

definitional and substantive changes were few and far between even though from my own participation and my colleagues, there was very healthy debate on the proposals contained thereon in the Bill.

But Mr. Speaker, today, this evening in this Honourable House it is a very interesting opportunity for introspection not just on this Bill but on the way we see the nation's business and the way we go forward as a Parliament in what we presume to be the interest of the people and it begs the question whether the cup is half full or whether the cup is half empty, because today, Mr. Speaker, as I believe the people who framed the House Rules may have anticipated in the best of Westminster Systems, we on this side of the House should have been able to have an opportunity to bring before the House matters that we consider pertinent, relevant and where we can take the lead and make an important national contribution.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if my Honourable friend would give way. Mr. Speaker, really not accurate nor indeed is it fair for the Honourable Member saying that they did not have an opportunity to have the business for the Opposition put on the Order Paper today for discussion. Mr. Speaker, the rules which you read out, I was not here but I was listening to it on television as I finished an important meeting that I..., is that private members business takes precedence before the business of the Government or the public business on the Order Paper. It was open for the Opposition to bring a Motion, file it in time.

When I was in the Opposition I used to file as soon after the first meeting for the year that is to say for this session, that is to say, as soon as the debates are finished on the budget so that I will be in time. Mr. Speaker, private members include David Browne, you do not understand. I am not saying in the out of time, the Senator David Browne, Mr. Speaker, is a private member and therefore, if he puts in a Motion ahead of you, his own takes precedence to yours that is the way the business is done that is the simple thing. So we must not, please we must not continue this, Mr. Speaker, saying that they were denied an opportunity. They are not denied an opportunity. They just did not come relative to Senator Browne's Motion; they did not come before him that is all.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker that is why I started with my proposition. Imagine yourself; you are the only man in the world what you are going to do. Point, Mr. Speaker and I am saying here we are this evening in this House and it is a wonderful opportunity in advancing our democracy for us as a Government or Opposition to say, how can we be of assistance, how can we facilitate the national debate, development by being inclusive? I am not going to divert it from the Honourable Prime Minister establishing his own straw man and knocking it down or on this concept of private members bill.

This motion of private members and I did not get there yet you know, it has been on the Order Paper since Thy Kingdom come, it been there, coming on Bill after Bill, after Bill, Parliament dissolve and then it come back, it just there, it just going round in circles just filibustering at nest that is basically what it is, wasting, frustrating and ensuring that an important subject matter that we on this side of this House would like to bring to the attention of this nation does not see the light of day and I want to suggest, Mr. Speaker, what that one has objection...,

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

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** I only want to find out, what is the relevance to the Bill that we are discussing?

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Mr. Speaker, I making the relevance and contact, Mr. Speaker.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** That has been going on for now for the last six minutes.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Well I have heard you entertain 45 minutes inside of here, so I could not even find contact.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Please go ahead with the Bill nah.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Well I now..., Mr. Speaker, we have this debate every time I stand up, there is a problem.

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

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** I am saying that we have before us today an important piece of legislation that in the grade of Suspects and Crimes Act for which we participate and there is a point of contact...,

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Yes.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Because it deals with important matters of national security.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Okay.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** The role and function of law enforcement, I am saying equally, we have before us on the Order Paper which if we had an opportunity a Motion which would have addressed the serious questions of crimes in this country and there is a relationship. So it is either we want to take a preventative approach or we want to take the approach of the Government and I believe and we believe prevention is always better than a pound of cure.

The point had been made in this Honourable House before and I will show you some of the points of contact, because we are going to give support you know, but understand our position. The point had been made before, Mr. Speaker, that it cost this state of ours \$5 to keep a young man or woman in the Scouts, Cubs, Pathfinders, Girl Guides, Brownies, Rangers whatever you name them \$5 by way of the national contribution to those national building bodies as we define them, but \$13,000 per year and towards them but it is more now probably \$15,000; \$16,000 to keep a person in the prison and much of this Bill although it speaks about fairness, is about being able to apprehend and put them behind bars and pay the \$16,000. Ours is about spending a little bit more than the \$5 or the \$120 per Cadet and preventing them having to be going through...,

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** If my Honourable friend will give way.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Honourable Member.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** If my Honourable Member would give way. Mr. Speaker, it is entirely misleading of the House to say that the purpose of the Bill is just to apprehend persons and to send them around there, meaning the prison. In fact the purpose of...

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** I did not say that.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker that is what was said

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** I did not say that.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** He said that.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** In your mind.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** We can repeat what was said you know Mr. Speaker that is what was said here.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** I am very good at saying what I want to say.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** I just heard what he said; I just heard what he said.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** No that is what is on your mind.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** It is just what he said.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Well sit down let me say what I want to say nah. Sit down, please.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** I am on my feet, Mr. Speaker.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** So am I. At least I am not giving way, [striking of the gavel] so name your point of order.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Please, please, Honourable Member.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, I...

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** But why don't he allow people to make their presentation.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Yes, you have given way so how now you are saying you are not giving way?

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** But then he is arguing, Mr. Speaker and you keep saying that a point of order is a point of order, he is making arguments so I will sit.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Well it takes two to tango you know. He cannot argue by himself you know.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I do not want to tango.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** All I am saying is that that statement is misleading the House, misleading anybody. That is not the purpose of the Bill.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Well I will caution the Member please. I will caution him.

Mr. Speaker, so I repeat myself. It cost this country \$5 to keep somebody out of there in terms of some recognised organisation \$120,000 per year for 1000 Cadets perhaps \$120 per Cadet but if they go round to the prison it \$13,000; \$14,000 or \$15,000 per prisoner, but I am not saying or suggesting that the law is solely to apprehend, it may save them from going around there. That is there and we say that we are going to give support. The point is we have before this House today a Motion in which the emphasis could have been on the positive.

There are things that have been said here in the Bill you know which are contained in this Motion with which I write about six years ago to have involved here, the Prime Minister himself made the point and we have it here. Item six effects, quality of improvement of the national security, we spoke way back then about the importance of the world St. Vincent and the Grenadines supposed to being professionalized and having people being able to have entry into the police force by way of university training on leadership development programmes, so that you can professionalize the offices of the police force. In our manifesto too, in fact, we were ahead in this House speaking about that in 2003. Eh? Leadership programme for the officer corps, institute short term contracts, recall experienced retired police officers, explore foreign assistance programmes, in fact, that is what is happening now with the gentleman who is here training the policemen [interjection] eh? And having attachments to courses abroad, so there are points of contact between things that we are speaking about, Mr. Speaker, [Interjection] no, you; you are not going to distract me from the point I am making.

So Mr. Speaker, it did not have to be an either or situation today in which this nation state could have had the benefit of an approach from others of us from this side of House which takes the preventative route. That is the point I want to make and we could have still have ample time before the evening is finished to continue in the vein that we had adapted to give support to the piece of legislation that is before us today by way of the Select Committee Report, we could have had them both. As it turns out we will have one only, the Government's notions of how best we can deal with the crime situation in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the Motion before this House, what we call the spiritual, social and redemption charter for the second time around will not be debated and I would so bet you, Mr. Speaker, our country and nation would be much worse off of it. That is the point I want to make and it is only a matter of time before several of the people who find themselves in the interviewing rooms to which the police and all others are being properly trained and monies are expended could have been prevented from being there had attention been given to what in fact we were proposing as an alternative route to deal with national security, crime prevention and related issues in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, quite a point of contact that is my point of contact, Mr. Speaker.

So yes, we hear and the Prime Minister has enumerated them that we can speak about the ways in which evidence can be taken or recorded, the effects of matters for serious crimes, regulations and orders, well I have gone a little ahead of myself because I have skipped a few pages and worked backwards, a whole garment of very important pages none of which we have major objections to, Mr. Speaker, but equally this Honourable House could have also heard today on this side of the House of how it is we could address the fundamentals that prepared crimes in the first case. For example, instituting a household sustainable programme that in every household at least one person is employed. That could have prevented a lot of them being in the lock up.

The police self they being caught with one pound of ‘spliff’ being tempted by the drug dealers to take X amount, being involved in trafficking of people and all of the crimes we could have done that. We spoke in our own charter as well, Mr. Speaker, or the value of encouraging prayers in schools, the school prayer and pledge to be recited daily to be encouraged in public offices; suggested prayers to be crafted in St. Vincent and the Grenadines Christian Council in collaboration with other religious organization, Ministry of Education will be executing it. All of this is important. Yes I am going through it pretty fast; it is there in your paper, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** He is asking me to give way or he is citing a point of order?

**HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER:** [Inaudible]

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Not properly, slowly,

**HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER:** [Inaudible]

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** No, no, you cannot lecture me about speaking properly, you could ask me to speak more slowly.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Let us...

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** You could ask me to speak more slowly. So now that you have invited me to, I will repeat..., [striking of the gavel].

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, could you please continue, or let the Member continue to make his presentation.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Thank you very much. So for the benefit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs...

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Well I would also caution on and Member the stenographers usually have a difficult time, they tell me from time to time understanding what is being said and therefore we need to..., we all need to take this thing into consideration.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Thank you and I am obliged, Mr. Speaker, so I am going to read over No. 2 on our spiritual, social, redemption charter the second item on our agenda, Minister

Slater, was to encourage prayers in school and we were suggesting (listen for the stenographers) that the school prayer and pledge to be recited daily, to be encouraged in public offices, we suggested prayers to be crafted by St. Vincent and the Grenadines Christian Council in collaboration with other religious organizations and we also said that the Ministry of Education would be the executing agency for this programme of encouraging prayers in the schools.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, let me ask you a question? Very serious, I am very serious; do not think I want to get at you. But is this another way of getting your Motion debated? Because I am getting that impression and you are not addressing the fundamental issue before you.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** I am, Mr. Speaker.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** It does not come over that way to me.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Well this is not strange, Mr. Speaker.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Go ahead, continue the debate.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** When it is being debated will depend on how they respond to me, then you said it takes two to tango, so please, Mr. Speaker, allow me to present myself. We also taught the spiritual close to Redemption Sharpes, Mr. Speaker. We would integrate Sunday Schools, supply funds for Sunday and Sabbath teachers and teachers or we said that the agency would be St. Vincent and the Grenadines Christian Council in collaboration with other religious bodies in the Ministry of Education. That is why, Mr. Speaker, I am saying all of this you know is the preventative approach to crime. You do not even have to reach detection and prosecution state.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** You see, Honourable Member, I like to understand what is taking place. Are you suggesting that what you are saying there would have negated the need for the...

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** It would have significantly reduced the amount of that trafficking that is what I am saying, Mr. Speaker, thanks for the assistance.

Mr. Speaker, in the charter..., do not smile because the Prime Minister is reenrolling us, Mr. Speaker and taking us off our line, we are on the same track, would strengthen development programmes, Mr. Speaker and we proposed, Mr. Speaker, in our charter that the Government would work with the National Youth Council to achieve a contribution of at least \$1000 per member group based on an approval programme basis. We could identify an organization that would benefit, the Cadet Force, Boys Scouts, Boys and Girls Brigade etc. could have been assisted again..., just get it through, Mr. Speaker, how many people you see before the courts...,

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Let us get to the Bill.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Where Members of these disciplined organisations...,

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** And I am very serious.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** They are few and far between. I am getting there, Mr. Speaker.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Let us get to this Bill now.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** [Inaudible]

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Now or I will ask you to discontinue your debate. You have said and you have made your point of relevance, I accept that...

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** If you so ask me I will oblige.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Yes, but let us get back to this Bill.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** This morning I did not even want...

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Because as far as I am concerned you are using this to debate your Motion that did not...

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** So you are asking me to stop?

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Get back to this Bill. That is the first thing I am asking you to do.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** But that is what I am doing.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Let us get back to this bill.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** So our spiritual charter would have on 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 speaks about stimulating intellectual capacity of our students by having debating societies in schools. We spoke about granting amnesty with people with firearms, illegal firearms, providing a girl's home and we see the Ministry, the Government has taken upon this, so there are points of contact. We heard that this morning...

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Let me make this point here Honourable Member. You are reading your speech; you are reading your speech

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** [Inaudible]

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Let me make this point here Honourable Member. You are reading your speech...

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** You are...

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** You are reading your speech.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Mr. Speaker, You are appearing into this debate just as you call the twelfth man in the field of cricket but I will put the speech away.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** You are reading your speech.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** So the speech is put away, Mr. Speaker. May I continue or not? Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. [Interjection] if you want to call the Speaker a poppy show I would not be so rude.

**HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS:** Scope of the Debate - and section is 37(1), debate upon any motion, bill or amendment shall be relevant to such motion, bill or amendment, except in the case of a motion for the adjournment of the House. Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Member to debate the content of the Bill that is before us and the relevancies. If the Member is grieved or feel cheated that today is the business, private member business and his motion should have been heard, Mr. Speaker, I have said to them on numerous occasions the business of the Opposition was attended to this morning by main questions, you have your day for business and you are bringing 14 questions in this House of Parliament, long, long, long questions. Two of the major questions in Parliament were on a lease to WINFA and the Farmers Association of this country that was their focus today. Their Motion was not a focus today, Mr. Speaker. They wasted the entire day that is by the order for them by asking 14 questions. What every month you want on the fiscal outturn. Every month you want to know how much shipped boxes of bananas. If I was the Opposition with a Motion, I have no questions to bring to this House and I get the whole day.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** [Striking of the gavel] okay Honourable Member, you have made your point [striking of the gavel]. Listen Honourable Member, I want you to get directly to the Bill that is before you and if you cannot do that I am asking you please to discontinue because I am not happy at all with the course..., and you yourself know that you are not dealing with the matter that is before you. It does not take a genius to understand that.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Mr. Speaker, let me say something to you with all due respect, I am not your child you know, Mr. Speaker. I mean I am an elected Member of this House.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** I am an elected Member of this Parliament.

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** I am an elected Member to this House represent the constituency. You consistently feel you can dress me down in here as if I am a child and tell...,

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, could you please take your seat?

**MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Okay that is fine, that is fine, but I only want you to understand that I am not your child in this House. I could understand that.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** I am also an elected Member of this Honourable House by almost you can say, the whole country. I am an elected Member of this House. Any further debate on the Bill, Honourable Member for South Central?

I am sorry I could not hear you Honourable Member.

**HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to debate the Bill that I consider to be of paramount importance. [Opposition walked out of the House].

**HONOURABLE SABOTO CAESAR:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to debate a Bill, Interviewing of Suspects for Serious Crimes Bill, a Bill that I consider to be of paramount importance. Mr. Speaker, one of the significant bedrocks that the Unity Labour Party will forever be remembered for is something that is almost clichéd now in many households across the nation that we are a Government that came to office that pledged to be tough on crime and the causes of crime. In 2001 that was our pledge and at every opportunity we have sought to fulfil this noble promise.

Mr. Speaker, it is very moving for me as a student of the law (I will forever remain a student of the law until I die because you never stop learning) to sit here in these chambers. I have been called to the bar for about six years now, this year would be my seventh year even though my practice was curtailed, I only had three years of practice actively at the bar, but it is definitely a joyous feeling to stand here to debate a piece of legislation that is definitely revolutionary in the Caribbean Jurisprudence.

I know that from the time that this Bill is passed into an Act, law schools and students across the region who study Criminal Caribbean Jurisprudence, Criminal Law they are focusing on the actions taken by the Parliament of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to advance the means by which evidence would be taken in the future in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I know that there are a lot of persons who are listening. St. Vincent and the Grenadines we have a very informed populist, follow the news, I know there are persons who are listening the Parliament not only here in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, students in Taiwan, students in London, in the United States of America and sometimes when you speak on issues of the law it is not the sexiest of topics, it is not a discussion on agriculture which you can see in your farm, it is not a discussion directly on tourism, but it is of paramount importance.

Mr. Speaker, whilst I sat there and I had a moment to wonder off whilst the Honourable Member from the other side was speaking. For the last few days the West Indies, Vincentians, persons in the region we are focused a lot on cricket and we were blessed here with lovely games and I just want to bring the point home very clearly for persons who are listening because you have to follow it very closely in order to understand. The Bill is called, “the Interviewing” when you do a questionnaire you interview, I may break it down to common parlance, the Interviewing of Suspects for Serious Crimes Bill and Mr. Speaker, as I read through the Bill for the last time a while ago, my mind went back to the last game in St. Lucia, my mind went back to cricket where Russell was playing a shot forward, he was on the edge of his crease, the Australians appealed, it was a very tense moment, I think he was batting with the Captain Sammy and it is a time when West Indians did not want to see their team lose a wicket.

The empire give not out, however, the Australians used their right to appeal. We all sat on our couches, those persons who were driving were concentrating more on the radio than where they were going, persons at Singer, because I passed there the same time, persons were there glued to the T.V sets and on a third empires decision Russell was sent. What that brought to mind immediately whilst I was growing up as a little boy in Diamonds, in San Souci, if I were watching cricket at Brother Jonny’s Shop in Diamonds ten years ago, when the empire said that Russell was not out he would not have been out because the whole issue of having a replay and a third empire was not the order the day.

Russell would have stayed on and with his elegance I believe that 30 runs that we would have needed may have been made and West Indies may have won the game to win the series. Mr. Speaker, what we are doing today is that as the society evolves and technology evolves we have to marry the technology with our culture and just as the jurisprudence evolves, we have to ensure that we seek to marry the technology to advance equity and justice in our jurisprudence [applause].

So Mr. Speaker, what we are here to debate is a Bill where we are integrating the technologies that we are exposed to, is a simple technology, one of videotaping, one which has been around for a very long time, we are integrating it into our justice system in a quest to seek for justice. And when I say to seek for justice I am not speaking about more rights for the prosecution or more rights for the defense, for justice is justice and the scales of justice must always be balance. And justice must not only be done, but yesterday as West Indians sat and looked at the games when Russell was sent out we knew for sure that justice was done and even though we were a bit taken a back that Sammy..., the ball had hit the pad before the bat which it took a very careful observation of the videotape to understand and appreciate that, all of us felt that justice was done. Even though we went on and we last the game, justice was done.

And Mr. Speaker, as we stand here as a Government, as we stand here as representatives of the people, it is our goal that justice must always be done. I remember once I was told in a class at law school my Criminal Law Lecturer Dana Seetahal, he said, “soon many of you would become prosecutors, but there is a difference between a prosecutor and a persecutor”, and he said that as a prosecutor you must always keep into the back of your mind that you do not want to send one innocent man to prison. You do not want to send an innocent man to prison. Also [interjection] yes and I remember when on a lighter note, he asked from a criminal law text, “what is the role of a prosecutor?” And I said that he is the administrator of justice, he said, “oh, you are the Minister, do not confuse it too.” For the Minister of justice and I remember many times at the bar, sometimes you realise within your mind that if you go along a particular way as a prosecutor, you would win the case. But there are so many points of weaknesses in the evidence, sometimes you throw in the towel because it is not every defense attorney will be able to spot the mistakes in the case, but once you spot those weaknesses that would not cause justice to be served, it is your duty.

And I must congratulate the Government of which have a part to take such a bold step, because as I listened to the Honourable Prime Minister in his presentation, the possibilities of having this piece of legislation enshrined in your jurisprudence is open to all and sundry but St. Vincent and the Grenadines is a shining example and I am certain that the students at law school when they answer their questions on the admissibility of evidence that this is something that would definitely take into careful consideration.

Mr. Speaker, for those who are listening and for those who are here in the House, evidence is the lifeblood of justice. You can be as truthful as you want, if you do not have the evidence to support your case, you do not it and you do not have a case in the law court and it is very important that at every turn we seek to embrace new avenues and possibilities of ensuring that the correct evidence makes it to the ears of our jurors and the judges and the persons who are concerned in the judiciary and the administration of justice and this is one case that would ensure that our ability and potential, to ensure that the scales of justice balance well will take place.

Mr. Speaker clause (6) provides that a suspect written statement read during a custodial interview must be electronically recorded and I know that there are many persons who are listening who are following this debate

who would not have been exposed to the courtroom before. But what virtually happens in the courtroom, Mr. Speaker, is that you hear one set of evidence from one side and sometimes almost contrary, quite to the opposite from the defence. So the prosecution is saying one thing and for the most part the defence is saying something else. And especially one point of great debate always in the court, especially the criminal courts has to do with the admissibility of the evidence and every single case that I would have done as a prosecutor whether it is St. Vincent and the Grenadines where I practiced for a brief period or Trinidad and Tobago where I was a junior or the British Virgin Islands where I was called or few cases I did in the Turks and Caicos, the issue of torture as it relates to whether the evidence was taken under undue force, whether the suspect giving the evidence was tortured to say a particular thing.

And I remember one time, Mr. Speaker, where as a prosecutor I had the opportunity in another jurisdiction to defend a matter and sitting on the total opposite side of the fence, because as a prosecutor once I would have read the evidence and I was satisfied that the evidence was not taken under circumstances of duress I defended the constabulary. When I had to prosecute and I was hearing a totally different tongue from the other side I was placed in a totally opposite position where I had to go against the constabulary.

What this piece of legislation is going to do, Mr. Speaker, it is going to assure us that in many cases where our minds were left in doubt, in the case of Russell where the pad received the ball before the bat we will have pungent evidence upon which we make our conclusion or at least better evident because I know that as defense attorneys are exposed to this piece of legislation more and more, they would also find the opportunities and avenues to critique this piece of legislation, not just a piece of legislation but the way that it pans out in the court.

Mr. Speaker, clause (9) is instructive and it speaks to the issue on exception, because those of us who have practiced the law it is always a fertile ground for examination as a student what are the exceptions and Mr. Speaker, clause (9) provides the exception to the general principle regarding the admissibility of a statement that is electronically recorded. The clause stipulates that where the court on its own motion so requires or where a suspect represents to the court that the statement was unfairly obtained the court shall now allow the statement to be given in evidence consequent to the court decision the burden of proof otherwise rest on the prosecution.

What this goes to say that yes we are introducing a very important piece of technology that can help us, but still the avenue and opportunity is still open for issues of admissibility and how we rely on the evidence taken is still open to question and I think this would go a very long way in balancing the scales of justice.

Mr. Speaker, I would not hold us for too much longer save to say, Mr. Speaker, that today marks a very important day in the jurisprudence, the legal jurisprudence of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and I know, I feel very comfortable and comforted that many of the guessing games which went on in the criminal law courts and many of the guesstimates which we had to engage in at the bar both as prosecutors and as defense attorneys as jurors as well and as judges that this is going to go a very long way in ensuring that justice is not only done, but that it is seen to be done. Mr. Speaker, I wish this bill a safe passage through this Honourable House. I am obliged.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Any further debate, Honourable Prime Minister.

**DR.THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Honourable Members who have spoken on this Bill. Mr. Speaker, in the light of some of the comments which have been made and as a consequence of what has transpired, the Opposition quite unfairly walking out after the Honourable Speaker has made a ruling, I think it is important in the context of what has happened today for a comment to be made to the extent that the issue of fairness arising not only the Bill itself but in the circumstances of the debate and the day's proceedings.

Mr. Speaker, let us begin with this moaning though sometimes some of the conduct may appear as though it is fit for moaning. Mr. Speaker, the Opposition has been given much latitude and so many things that I think it is time for the record to be put straight and incompetence on the side of the Opposition must not be mistaken by them for lack of opportunity.

I begin with questions. Mr. Speaker, Standing Order 19(3) says, "The replier to any question may be deferred to the next sitting of the House unless the Member asking the question shall have given not less than ten (10) clear days notice in writing of his intention to ask the chair, ten (10) clear days."

Mr. Speaker, clear days mean and the interpretation Act section 48 on the computation of time tells us that you do not count the day on which an event is to happen first where you are supposed to give the notice and the day when the notice is intended for. So if the 26<sup>th</sup> of the month, today, questions would have to be submitted ten (10) clear days prior to the 26<sup>th</sup> and if it is a Sunday which is the 10<sup>th</sup> day you have to count an additional day. So Mr. Speaker, if you take ten (10) clear days forward from the 26<sup>th</sup>, 16 you minus one up front and one at the bottom, so you will see that the questions should have been submitted at a date no later than the 14<sup>th</sup> if they are to be answered that is what the law says.

Mr. Speaker, the Opposition today which is one of the main ways in which the executive is held to account, the Opposition asked 14 questions some of their questions with many parts, but the day on which the questions were given certainly to me and I believe to everyone else was on the 19<sup>th</sup> that day the 19<sup>th</sup> was Monday last week. When I arrived here for the Select Committee on this very Bill I received the question. I asked the Leader of the Opposition the afternoon when we are considering the other Bill why is it the questions came so late, he say, he thought that they came in on Friday, but I checked with the Clerk's Office and was told that it was on the Monday when I received the question.

So you are giving me a question on Monday the 19<sup>th</sup> when you should have given me the questions on the 12<sup>th</sup>, not the 14<sup>th</sup> because you have to give me ten (10) clear days and taking into account further that Tuesday was a public holiday we had three (3) days to prepare the answer for these questions Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, yet every single Member of this House came here diligently, Mr. Speaker, and answered every single question, including questions which were misdirected. For instance, a question which was directed to the Honourable Minister for Social Development for which it should have been my question, I answered it without demur. When a Member for West Kingstown asked a question in respect of an agreement for which under the Standing Orders I should not have answered him, the question should not have been on the Order Paper, because there is an agreement which is a public document, I answered it nevertheless.

I want the public to notice this, we are asked 14 questions, some with many parts, some wrongly directed or should not have been asked and yet we answered all after three (3) days Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, down to

this morning I had to be finalizing information on some questions before I came to this Honourable House. Out of respect..., could you imagine if we had come here, if I had said, Mr. Speaker, we got these questions on the 19<sup>th</sup> there are at least seven (7) days late and we will deal with them at the next sitting, because this is what it says, “the reply to any question may be deferred to the next meeting of the House unless the Member asking the question shall have given not less than ten (10) clear days notice in writing of his intention to ask the same. We did not take..., it is not because I do not know the rules, Mr. Speaker, the very fact I can sit here and draw your attention to them would be that you would know I know the rules and I know the parent law in respect of the Interpretation Act as to how you deal with ten (10) clear days.

Mr. Speaker, I had risen on a point of order..., well the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown give way, about private members business. Mr. Speaker, when I was in the Opposition I know that private members business moves not Opposition members business, but private members that is to say members who are not members of the Cabinet, there are two persons on this side of the House who are not Members of the Cabinet, the Parliamentary Secretary is not a Member of the Cabinet. If the Parliamentary Secretary is given permission by the Prime Minister who is Chairman of the Cabinet to attend the Cabinet meeting on a particular issue that is as a matter of courtesy and he has to take the Oath of Secrecy. In the case of the other private member is the Honourable Senator David Browne.

Mr. Speaker, Senator Browne brought his motion ahead of the Opposition motion. The Opposition motion came to the Clerk of the House on Monday when they sent their questions too. By that time Senator David Browne’s Motion had been put in several days earlier and in time. In fact, properly speaking the motion for the Opposition should not have been on the Order Paper because it did not meet the time limits. Because again if you look at the Motion it should be there I think within ten (10) days also Mr. Speaker, the same ten (10) days but yet it was permitted.

What I used to do when I was in the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, knowing that you had other private members on the Government side, and on one occasion, Stuart Nanton of blessed memory had beat me to a motion on the third sitting and that was the last day that it happened for all the years I was in Opposition. I reproached myself for having been negligent to have permitted him to get in before me and what we in the Opposition did, we asked no questions, we put our Motion in time as soon after the first sittings, so it is on the Order Paper for the second sitting and it would be there first for the third sitting, we ask no question, so after obituaries and congratulations we were ready by 11 O’clock to start the debate on our motion up to 5 O’clock.

In fact, what used to happen sometimes then, they would take lunch for three hours, [interjection] but I would not mind, I did not mind that, because we got in a couple of hours of debate. The Honourable Member says, the cattle tongue or cattle skin they must have been eating ingest. Mr. Speaker, if I may say it as Leader of the House, the Government business, sorry, I mean when a Member for the Opposition in this case, the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown says to the Speaker, so what happens, you are the twelfth man for that side over there? Meaning that you are partial and you are behaving..., that alone is extraordinary disrespect and they have walked out here today, why, they have asked questions this morning and the questions boomeranged on them, they had not done their work in respect of the Motion which they had filed, which had come in from long time before since they brought it in 2003, it is the same motion on crime, in 2003, February 2003, so I do not understand February 2003 that is nine years ago. You mean if you are bringing it nine years ago you cannot

bring it earlier than Monday, you cannot bring it in time, to get it early on the Order Paper? And then you want to blame me, you want to blame the Government; you want to blame the Honourable Speaker, please. This is the same thing that they do not know how to bring a motion of 'No Confidence' and had the extraordinary situation where the Prime Minister had to explain how a motion of 'No Confidence' is to be brought against him. It is the first time in parliamentary democracy that a Prime Minister has had to explain how the Opposition should bring a vote of 'No Confidence' against him.

I mean and after the Leader of the Opposition has been in this House for 14 years, he was Prime Minister for few months, Minister for 2½ years, Leader of the Opposition for 11 years, they took part in constitutional debate, and he did not even know that. How can they come and make these complaints? So Mr. Speaker, I wanted in the light of all what has transpired to make those comments.

Substantively, Mr. Speaker, the Opposition speaks all the time about its social and redemption charter as part of his motion..., they brought this motion in February 2003, we moved an amendment to it and as a consequence of the amendment they walked out, they did not stay to debate. We established a 14-point strategy on crime and all what we are doing here in this Bill is part of that strategy. It is there. Mr. Speaker that is why we use music that is why we train the police force in which did, the way we are doing it, have graduates in. They went out for 17 years none of these things.

When they are talking about Girl Guides and Scouts, look Mr. Speaker, the Girl Guides and the Scouts have been stronger than they are today and the Cadets were under 100 they are now close to 900 Cadets [applause] including a marine wing. It is part of the public policy of this Government within the framework of the 14-point strategy to build organizations within the schools and the communities, pan against crime, when we arrived in this country there were two pan sides. When we arrived in office panorama had not existed for ages, today it has senior panorama and junior panorama. Everywhere you turn you find pan sides. I wonder if these gentlemen and the two ladies from the Opposition whether they have some amnesia [interjection] eh?

I mean Mr. Speaker, I really, I am at a loss. For 17 years you cannot have graduates enter the police force, we are now doing it, you saying it was your idea. What is your idea and you did not do it for 17 years? The Cadets we have 900 that was your idea, the contributions we are making, they want to pay teachers to teach at Sunday School, but they did not want to pay the schools, the religious schools, the schools with the Sisters, the Catholic Schools, the Seventh Day Adventist School, the Anglican School, they did not want to pay the teachers until they have to march on the day of left handed Lenny and the Honourable Leader of the Opposition then Minister of Finance, said not a cent for them, went on and accused the Nuns of being foreigners who come in to stir up trouble, they did not want to pay them. So you do not want to pay teachers who teaching people children in Secondary School, all of a sudden you want to pay teachers to teach Sunday school and you expect people to take you seriously? I mean, I thought that it was a different world these Honourable gentlemen occupied when they were talking. We are the ones..., we have a ratio of teachers to students and whatever that ratio is we pay all the teachers in all the denominational schools.

It was their Government which took away from the Anglican Church in Bequia the school and we give it back [applause] and they tell us now aid\* paid teachers to hold Sunday School? Mr. Speaker, the problem is not teachers for Sunday School you know it is students. They problem is not teachers for Sunday School, you have an abundance of teachers for Sunday School or Sabbath School. You know, Mr. Speaker, we have the churches

in this country get such assistance from this Government in every particular way. We give lands to them, we fix churches, so this opportunistic thing about teaching Sunday School and children must pray in school, children praying all the time in schools. We start schools with prayers everyday. Which schools did they attend? Children pray everyday in schools. In fact, so much so that some religions complain that they do not want their children to be included in those prayers because apparently those prayers are a wrong set of prayers. I do not know why or if that does not accord with them, I do not know why, I am trying to grasp the reason. I respect those who say they do not want their children to be part of the prayers, I respect that but that does not mean that I understand all the reasons, but I respect their reasoning. At least I respect them for what they are saying.

So I am..., where is this..., so that the crimes are going to be solved in this country by paying teachers to teach Sabbath School, Saturday or Sunday when the proliferation of churches all over the country ain't helping that is what they are suggesting? We must stop the demagogic on these things and be perfectly rational. We set up a Ministry of National Reconciliation, the churches are involved in that, Mr. Speaker, the Education Revolution by taking children off the street, we are seeing that that is a way to help to deal with the crime problem and it is a multifaceted issue and I do not understand..., I heard the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown says that all the changes he saw on this were minor changes on the Bill.

In the Select Committee important changes were made to improve this Bill, for instance, the contributions which have been made (and they may get upset with me for saying this) from those who came who belong to the Opposition, the most important contributions were made by Doctor Linton Lewis, but he represented the Bar Association and he made suggestions which were incorporated here. He did not come to all of the meetings, he came to the first one and every single suggestion for change by any Member of the Select Committee or anyone invited was fully discussed and a consensus formed and those changes were made.

Sometimes persons from the Opposition feel that if they made a suggestion for a change that because they say so you must change it. It has must past the test of reasonableness, it must past some objective criteria and this Bill was drafted by a British expert and we have hammered it into shape in the Select Committee.

Mr. Speaker, this is one omission in this Bill is left out by error and I had passed it up there to you, Mr. Speaker and at the end of clause (13) a clause 13(2) should go in, 13(1) is where an order is made by the Minister to amend the First Schedule but we do not want the Minister just to make it so, the Minister must bring it to the House and have it subject to a negative resolution. So it would read "13(2) an order made under subsection (1) shall be subject to negative resolution of the House of Assembly," which is the only amendment, Mr. Speaker, I am proposing on the floor and I am inviting that amendment to be seconded.

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

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, that amendment which was there in the original, it was there in the original but was not reproduced here, and it was not taken out in the Select Committee, but because it is the final draft before you I would like to have inserted and that has been passed.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that a Bill for Act to provide for the creation of the video and audio recording of suspect interviews by law enforcement officers be read a third time by title and passed.

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

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

3. **BEQUIA COMMUNITY CHURCH INCORPORATION BILL, 2012**

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

4. **CHRISTIAN PILGRIM FELLOWSHIP INCORPORATION BILL, 2012**

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

5. **PRAYER AND FAITH ASSEMBLY INCORPORATION BILL, 2012**

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

6. **MARANATHA BAPTIST CHURCH INCORPORATION BILL, 2012**

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

8. **HARVEST BIBLE CHAPEL INCORPORATION BILL, 2012**

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

9. **BEREAN BAPTIST CHURCH INCORPORATION BILL, 2012**

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

## **RESOLUTION**

### **POST OFFICE AMENDMENT REGULATIONS 2012**

**HONOURABLE MAXWELL CHARLES:** Thank you.

**WHEREAS**, the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Postal Corporation Act, chapter 416 of the Laws of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines stipulates that regulations may be made to provide for the rates of postage and the terms and conditions and method of payment thereof;

**AND WHEREAS**, regulations were made and published in the *Gazette* on the 28<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2012;

**AND WHEREAS** section 67(4) provides that regulations made under section 67 of this said Act shall be subject to negative resolution of the House of Assembly.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that this Honourable House pass the Post Office (Amendment) Regulations 2012, No. 8 of 2012 by resolution of the House of Assembly.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Resolution passed.**

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Few matters which we would wish to have on the Order Papers for the next time, important bits of legislation including a very important one dealing with the Market Value Based Property Tax System which was announced in the Budget and we are doing some tidying up, Mr. Speaker. The suggested date is the Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> May. This House, do stand adjourned until 10:00 a. m. Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2012.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**House stands adjourned at 6:53 p. m.**

**Until Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2012 at 10:00 a. m.**