

No. 7

Tuesday

Second Session

28th February, 2012

Ninth Parliament

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

ADVANCE COPY

OFFICIAL REPORT

CONTENTS

Tuesday 28th February, 2012

Prayers	5
Apologies	5
Obituaries	6
Congratulatory Remarks	13
Confirmation of Minutes	18
Statement by Ministers	18
Petitions	22
Questions for Oral Answers	23
Adjournment	71

THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE SECOND 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.

SEVENTH SITTING

28TH FEBRUARY, 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

Member for East St. George

Minister of Agriculture, Forestry
and Fisheries and Rural Transformation
Honourable Montgomery Daniel

Member for North Windward

Minister of Tourism and Industry
Honourable Saboto Caesar

Member for South Central Windward

Minister of Health, Wellness and
The Environment
Honourable Cecil McKie

Member for West St. George

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

Member for Central Leeward

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

Member for South Windward

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

Government Senator

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

Government Senator

Honourable David Browne

Government Senator/ Deputy Speaker

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE

Dr. the Honourable Godwin Friday

Member for Northern Grenadines

Honourable Terrance Ollivierre

Member for Southern Grenadines

Honourable St. Claire Leacock

Member for Central Kingstown

Honourable Daniel Cummings

Member for West Kingstown

Honourable Roland Matthews

Member for North Leeward

Honourable Nigel Stephenson

Member for South Leeward

Honourable Vynnette Frederick

Opposition Senator

Honourable Anesia Baptiste

Opposition Senator

ABSENT

Honourable Arnhim Eustace
Leader of the Opposition

Member for East Kingstown

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade
And Consumer Affairs

Government Senator

Honourable Dr. Douglas Slater

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY 28TH FEBRUARY, 2012

PRAYERS

HONOURABLE HENDRICK ALEXANDER, MR. SPEAKER read the prayers of the House.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, there are several persons who have made important contributions to our country.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Prime Minister, I know..., just now, ..., I make this particular announcement that I have been informed that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition would not be able to make it to parliament this morning because he is not feeling very well. I think I should do that immediately. Thank you.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, a bad flu is going around and I wish the Honourable Leader of the Opposition a speedy recovery and I am sure he might be listening and in addition to whatever remedies the doctors has given him, people would tell him a little sunset strong and some lime will help. But we wish him all the best. I know it could be a terrible thing.

Mr. Speaker, there are several persons, several of our citizens who have died since the last time we met and I know that Honourable Members will have the inclination and some would no doubt have planned to do obituaries on them, so I would not want to take up too much time. I want to speak towards the death of Neitha Taylor of Grenada. Neitha Taylor, the widow of Sylvester “Scoby” Taylor passed away since the last time we met. Neitha hails from the De Freitas clan in Colonarie and in fact, Neitha’s family is related to the Gonsalves side of my family. Neitha was a distinguished accountant; she made an important contribution to this country. She brought up lovely children, she was a loving wife, a lady of tremendous humour, community spiritedness and it is really sad to hear of her passing and I..., all the Members on our side and I sure the whole House expressed profound condolences to the family and friends of Neitha Taylor. I would have an opportunity to speak, to many of the family members as we go along. So I just want to acknowledge her own important contribution to our country.

Mr. Speaker, George Brizan was Prime Minister of Grenada for a short while and he was Minister of Finance. He served in several portfolios in Grenada. He was an important figure in the restoration of competitive democracy after the collapse of the Grenada revolution and he too made an important contribution to his country and to the region. He was a devout regionalist. I know his family and I express condolences for the passing of their beloved George Brizan.

Mr. Speaker, I would just acknowledge the passing of David Bonadie. I know that Honourable Senator Francis intends to speak towards his own contribution, but I would like to acknowledge his immense contribution. He was an entrepreneur of the old school, hardworking, good and decent human being, honest to the core. I express condolences to the bereaved family and to his friends. May they all rest in peace.

OBITUARIES

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Obituaries, no I think I saw the Honourable Member for West Kingstown. I suppose [inaudible]

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, on the question of obituaries, I have spoken just twice in this Honourable House. Today I wish to pay a few remarks on the passing of three persons who were residents of the constituency of West Kingstown. I speak first of an elderly gentleman who is not very well-known. He was 103 years old. His name is Darnley Charles; he is originally from Grenada, spent quite a few years in the United States of America and has been living in St. Vincent for very many years. This is a gentleman who was full of life, who at the age of 80 took unto him another wife. Up until three days before his passing when I visited him at his home he was at that point a completely different person and I knew then that he was not looking well. But he was always the person who was full of life and always had advice to offer. Most of his family is in Trinidad and Grenada, but there are a number of persons here in St. Vincent including the person who looked after him after the passed several years. Mr. Charles a very special man, the last caretaker who was there replaced her mother because Mr. Charles made it clear he only wanted young girls to look after him. May his soul rest in peace.

Mr. Speaker, the second person Miss Veronica Samuel-Johnson, a blind lady almost 76 years old was brutally murdered at her home a mere three days before her birthday on Valentine's Day. This lady too is of Grenadian stock who never lost her Grenadian accent, indeed her children also carried a strong Grenadian accent. This dying lady more than made up for her lack of vision as we know it and indeed many people in Great House today still do not believe that she was indeed blind and as I said at her funeral, I think the blindness is more with us than with her, because persons at that ill tend to develop their other skills so strongly that they can detect persons from the various sounds, and smells and touch.

Mr. Speaker, through this media I wish to make a very special appeal on behalf of the family of this lady and in particular the daughter who lives and continues to live very close right next door to the mother, because most of the family is not around her, this young lady is taking the death in a very sorrowful way and I call on the Social Welfare Department and indeed the entire community to rally around this lady and give her the needed comfort and support, failing that we may have another tragedy. It is very evident that she more than any, and she has a very small child to look after, she more than any needs a lot of assistance.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, David Bonadie was laid to rest following an illness, which give his family some time to prepare for the inevitable and although death is never something that one takes easily, I know that they are

consoled by the fact that the Almighty allowed them some period to prepare. David Bonadie as everyone knows was a very staunch supporter of the New Democratic Party and in fact was one of the first Senators in an NDP Government in 1984. He was also a Deputy Speaker of the House. But beyond that, Mr. Speaker, David Bonadie exemplified the true Vincentian spirit. Here is a man who gives and gives very discretely to all and sundry. Here is a man whose generosity I believe is unsurpassed, but not the person who gives and made boast about it, a very jovial man but a very hardworking man, a strong family man. We on this side of the House and I believe all Members of this Honourable House Mr. Speaker, would wish his family all of the very best as we extend sincerest condolences to them in their bereavement. Thank you.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Senator Francis, Minister.

HONOURABLE SENATOR JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer condolences to the families of three individuals namely Mr. Charles Alexander of Sion Hill who we know have spent I believe the greater part of his life in the printing business. He has worked with everybody in St. Vincent who owned and ran a printery and he himself established a small but effective printery just beyond the corner at Ju-C. A stalwart of Sion Hill community for many years and his sons are well-known. I know he has a lot of children. Every time I hear the story from him I hear a different number so I would not want name the number today, but I want to express my sincerest condolences to the members of his family.

Mr. Speaker, there is an individual who died recently called “the Beaver”, it is Gerald Greaves, he died being the Office Attendant and Driver for the office of the Leader of House of Assembly. Beaver lived in Largo Height, come off the Greaves family, a very big family, De Freitas and Greaves family in that area and many others and other linkages up there. Beaver worked officially for us for the party and when we formed Government in 2001 he was elevated to the position I just named. In his younger days we coined a phrase, “don’t craver, leave it to beaver”. He would carry out any duty asked of him efficiently and effectively. A father of four and a very loving husband to his wife We at the party office and the general membership of the party would remember Beaver for a very long time to come. He had an accident immediately following the 2009 Referendum Exercise and he got damaged and never really recovered himself to the full Beaver that we knew, but still every single day of his life he would report for work and get the work done. So I want to extend again, I did so at his funeral, but, nationally, sincerest condolences to his family, the extended family and also the Unity Labour Party family.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to add my piece to David Bonadie and I do acknowledge the statement made by the Member, Parliamentary Representative for West Kingstown, he was an ardent supporter of the New Democratic Party. But I have known David Bonadie personally for years. In fact I grew up helping my mother when she ran her shop in Park Hill going to Bonadie’s supermarket then in Middle Street where Moussa is now to help my mother take groceries out and pack them in the back of the car to go back to Park Hill and then to San Souci. So Mrs. Bonadie I have known personally for years and it is a lady that I carry most respect for. I have spoken to her two or three times since the passing of David. I could not attend the funeral because the same day of the funeral I left on an overseas trip.

David got into politics, in fact, shortly after I built my house in Penniston in '84, David visited my house and declared to me that he was going to be the candidate for the New Democratic Party in South Leeward and we talked and then entered Monty Eustace at the same time and it created quite a stir, quite a long discussion over drinks and lunch and then on his way out he asked, "what are my thoughts on his candidacy", and I said to him, "I will give you my opinion on the second visit, but there was never to be a second visit, because shortly thereafter there was a change and Jerry Scott became the candidate for South Leeward. In fact when the NDP formed Government in 1984 David was made a Senator and elevated to the position of Deputy Speaker of the House of Assembly. His dear wife Anita comes from a family that we know very well, the Mc Millan family in the Golden Vale area and we also carry a very close relationship with Anita.

At a personal level I never sold Appleton Rum in my bar at carnival until David started visiting. He made one visit one day and then drove away and said I did not have the right rum. I enquired what he wanted and I sent for a bottle of Appleton and every carnival since then he has come back discretely and contributed significantly to my little bar, humble bar down at the Lower Bay Street. My connection with the Bonadie family goes beyond politics. David has been generous to many, many persons and while the Member for West Kingstown said discretely, lots of people know that, the entire nation. David ran the supermarket for the family in the market square. He was into leading his sister after the passing of his father in the more sophisticated area and stayed in the market because I think that is where David felt more comfortable.

We are said on his passing and I want to express and extend again to the Bonadie family, Mrs. Bonadie, Paula and Websy, Chris and Mrs. Garraway who is the wife of Dr. Garraway, I cannot remember her first name, from my mom, my family, the Unity Labour Party and the Government. I suspect that the Speaker may very well say a few words but I want to say that he was a former member of this Parliament and as a Senator myself, I expressed condolences to his family from this Honourable House of Parliament. Thank you.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Central Leeward.

HONOURABLE MAXWELL CHARLES: Mr. Speaker, I rise to express condolences to the family of the following persons who would have passed since we last met here, persons from Central Leeward. They are as follows, Lloyd Johnson, Jacintha Keel, Michelle Fraser and Julius Gould, a former worker at SVG Air, a very outstanding worker. Also to family and wife of the late Mr. Kenroy Mapp who was a very famous nation builder as far as the insurance business here in St. Vincent is concerned. Also a personal friend of my family, one who led me into buying my first insurance policy, he will long be remembered. Others from the Layout area, we have passing Claude De Shong, Mack Samuel, Robert Velox very recently, Muriel Fraser and I have just learnt of the passing also on the weekend of Leon Douglas who in the past was a senior policeman here in St. Vincent, he gave outstanding service to the Royal St. Vincent Police Force. May they all rest in peace.

But I cannot sit before I also join in expressing condolences to the late David Bonadie also. I dealt with him on many occasions and he would always be remembered for him being a good natured person, very benevolent and also his support for local business here in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Mr. Speaker may they all rest in peace. Thank you.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for the Northern Grenadines.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GOODWIN FRIDAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to join with all the Honourable Members of this House in expressing condolences to those persons who have been mentioned. I want to specifically mention of course the..., on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition who would have liked to have made his own remarks in this Honourable House regarding the passing of Mr. David Bonadie. We have heard a lot of the wonderful things that have been said about him and that was fairest testimony to that or proof or evidence however it is was of course, the large funeral that he had here in Kingstown, one of the largest I have seen in this country and the respect shown to him by the vendors who usually sell outside his supermarket by suspending their own commercial operations on the day of his funeral.

Mr. Speaker, you know what sometimes we in our own lives, we tell of all the good things that we have done but the best example or proof of that is of course what other people say of you and when they come to say goodbye to you in large numbers. I think the family of Mr. Bonadie would have been very pleased that his work and his spirit of generosity did not go unnoticed in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and it gives hope, Mr. Speaker, for us to live by that example as well by knowing that good deeds do not always go unrecognized.

Mr. Speaker, I wish also to give my condolences here in this House to one of the members of my own community Mr. Griffith 'Leverson' Ollivierre. Mr. Ollivierre was from Paget Farm, he was a stalwart of the community in Paget Farm, a good friend to many, myself, he lived a long life, he died at 92 years old on Saturday 11th February and was buried a week later. He was a big man in the community in Paget Farm and certainly in the whole of Bequia. He operated a seine from his island, Family Island in Savarn for many years taking over from his own father; he was the pastor of the Wayside Gospel Hall in Paget Farm for many, many years since before I can remember. As a large land owner in Paget Farm as well he and his father would have sold or given land to many people in Paget Farm to establish homes and he was well respected in that community, Mr. Speaker.

In recent years he had declined as his mind began to fail and he had to rely on his family and his relatives, primarily his granddaughter Nicola Ollivierre for daily support and he got it, Mr. Speaker, in a way that all of us would hope to if ever live long enough to have to rely on family members or friends for our own personal care. They looked after him very well. I want to say to the family that although I know they miss him greatly and members of the community do too, that he is in a better place, because in the last few years' things were difficult for him.

I wish also, Mr. Speaker, to encourage the other members of our community to live by the example because Griffith Ollivierre also for his tremendous generosity. You, when the seine at Savarn came in with fish, basically they would come on the beach and whoever wanted would come and take fish and he did the same thing you know with the lands that the family owns and so on that you know you can help people who have poor means to be able to establish a home and to have tenure to the title to their land.

Mr. Speaker, he would be solely missed in the community of Paget Farm and in Bequia and I hope that his memory, well I know, it will live on for a long time with his family and also in the community that he has

served. He was also a Justice of the Peace for a number of years and you know people would go to him for counsel and to help in the solving of their various problems and when you do those things and you still remain popular in the community it means that you know how to deal with people and how to deal with problems. I wish I have a little bit of those skills. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Senator Baptiste.

HONOURABLE SENATOR BAPTISTE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to express my deepest condolences to Mrs. Anita Bonadie and family on the passing of their loved one Mr. David Bonadie. I too would like to recognize the memory of David Bonadie as very generous, kindhearted person who touched me personally, because I recalled the very first time I met him he had very encouraging words to give to me as a young politician and every other occasion on which we met it was always the same attitude with me and I was really happy to know somebody like that, my senior in my young life and I want to just say to Anita that I keep you in my prayers. I know it is not easy, but I pray that the wonderful memories that you have of your dear husband would comfort you and that you would all heal over time.

I would also like to express condolences to Mr. Brenan Cato and family on the passing of their father Ian Cato of Belmont. Mr. Cato was the owner of E. J. Cato and Sons Company Limited and I met him just once and it is just amazing how you can just meet someone once never knowing that it is the last time you would have seen them, but I met him once and on that on occasion, again he had a lot of encouraging words for me, gave me constructive criticism with respect to my work in politics and it was just a very pleasant meeting and it just serves to remind us that one day we are here and tomorrow we are not, so we cannot take any meeting for granted. May God bless his family and comfort them. I am obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I will then the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown and then I will take you after.

HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: Saboto Caesar knows he is supposed to give a little preference; we have worked that out among ourselves. Mr. Speaker, there is a certain character about the way this morning condolences have been given that one cannot help taking note of. I mean I know it is a tradition but is a degree of serenity about the way Members have expressed themselves this morning that I find particularly touching and cannot help but observe as well, Mr. Speaker, that the comments read was that of the passing of the late David Bonadie. I do not want to be facetious, Mr. Speaker, and I do not know if you yourself would be commenting on it, but perhaps we may have just missed a little opportunity in our own protocol as House Members for one who as a serving Member and the Deputy Speaker that we perhaps should have given a minute silence and maybe it is not too late you may want to do so when you are in fact taking the chair.

But I just want to join with the very many comments that have gone before and identify fully and as the Honourable Prime Minister would say at times, adopt them as my own comments so as not to prolong this morning's ceremony. I would have met David in my own personal life as a young businessman myself and in

later years in the political life and all that have been said of him is so true that there is very little that one can add to the sentiments.

George Brizan in my earlier days when I made a better living and rally up and down the Caribbean and international in consultancy I worked with him and learnt a lot through him, he was extremely good at expressing himself in the English Language and technical details in his field of economics and anyone who had the opportunity to interface with him knew that they were sitting among a scholar of some note and I remember him in that regard.

I also had the privilege of working with Ms. Neitha Taylor when I took chairmanship of the National Broadcasting Corporation after Mr. Gunn and Mr. Liverpool in the earlier times and she indeed was a very quiet unassuming but competent lady and certainly when she spoke it was of merit and one had no option but to listen and listen carefully to her wisdom that that she expressed.

I know, Mr. Speaker, that the Leader of the Opposition regretted that he had to be a little late in attendance of that funeral of the goodly gentleman from Sion Hill I think in the same way that Honourable Julian Francis indicates that David Bonadie was a staunch NDP ite, I think it is known that Mr. Alexander was also of the other side of the ULP and I know Mr. Eustace was detained because we were meeting the Falkland delegation on that day and he tried and tried and tried and it took him some time to get there. Mr. Francis was a little careful in calling numbers, the numbers I heard Minister Francis is fifteen children, I do not know if you have more than that, but I am taking any liberties and with the same woman and yes, Mr. Speaker, I see you open your jaws in awe and that is what I am told. If I am mistaken it is after Minister Francis, but I just want to express again condolences from all of us on this side of the House on those people who have passed.

Mr. Speaker, just allow me this quick one, Mr. Speaker. I went to a funeral yesterday where I think it is a Sharon Lyttle of Kingstown Park who would have died of cancer. It was a very strange experience for me personally in that two or three years ago I met that lady just outside the Jehovah Witness area there and she had some problems with her vehicle and it is raining terribly and she had a little child and she did not know what to do and I did not know her, stop, took her to Banfield Gas Station, got her to buy a container of gas, took her back and the car started and she went on her merry way.

Mr. Speaker, although I knew about her and her family I never met her again one and one until yesterday at her funeral at the same place and by coincidence had to bear her body out of the church and also at the cemetery and it is one of those kind of coincidences that faces you and you want know what is the message. I just say that for what it worth. I will leave it there as one of life's very, very strange experience an alpha and an omega experience. Much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for South Central.

HONOURABLE SABOTO CAESAR: Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my sincerest condolences to the family of Marie Theobalds of Mount Grennam. She died at the age of 101. She was an extremely hardworking and dedicated woman, dedicated to agriculture in her formative years. Mr. Speaker, she worked all her life on the

San Souci Estate planting arrowroot, a woman of great mental strength and fortitude. Her life, Mr. Speaker, was an expression of the immense contribution of women to agriculture in her village and in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Mr. Speaker, may she rest in peace. Thank you.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for South Windward.

HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise this morning to pay tribute to the life of the late Cassian Browne of Biabou. He passed away yesterday afternoon following brief illness. Cassian Browne as I remember him was an outstanding businessman in the community of Biabou. He had a..., the first person in that area to operate a bakery. I can recall as a young boy at the Biabou Methodist School going across to the bakery and you getting your 7 cents bread. Many a times when you go there when you buy, a dollar bread, Mr. Browne would surely make sure that you get extra. He was a very generous man; an Anglican like myself, the community of Biabou will surely miss him, Mr. Speaker.

I would also like to join with Senator Baptiste expressing my own condolences on the passing of Mr. Ian Cato, a very good friend of mine, the sons my very good friends. I attended the funeral at the Anglican Church at Evesham on Saturday afternoon, may his soul and all the souls of those who have gone before us, rest in peace. I am much obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for North Leeward.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATTHEWS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I wish to join other Honourable Members who would have paid tribute to Mr. David Bonadie. I am saying that I never met him personally, I know who he was, but I just want to say to his wife and family my deepest sympathies. I want to take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to express my condolences to five persons from the constituency of North Leeward. First of all I want to express my sympathy to Lemore Pierre and Jex Henville who met their death after a serious motor vehicle accident in the town of Layou on 29th January. These gentlemen were from the village of Fitz Hughes and they were in Layou to do what they love to do best, that is playing dominoes, and an accident took place and they died subsequently. So to their families, I wish to express my deepest sympathies.

I also wish to express sympathies to two ladies from the village of Petit Bordel Mrs. Carmel Hooper and Ms. Rona Louie who have gone to the great beyond. Both ladies would have contributed significantly to the community of Petit Bordel and they will be greatly missed, so in that regard I express my sympathies.

Mr. Speaker, during the debate of the budget, 2012 budget we were greeted with the sad news of the passing of one Christopher George of Chateaubelair. Mr. Christopher George was a friend of mine; he was also one of the first students who have attended the Petit Bordel Secondary School and I would consider him a trail blazer in that regard. Because as a gentleman he lived an exemplary life and a lot of us followed in his footsteps. I recall during that time when after completing his secondary education he was one of the first student to be hired back there as a teacher at the school and he would have done extremely well in the areas of music and also science, the subjects that he taught. Mr. George would have been..., he would have recorded many music, I think either two or three albums to his credit and he could be consider a very good gospel singer in his own rights. His wife

Melrose and I were class mates at Petit Bordel Secondary School and I know that she and along with her three kids would miss Mr. George very much and the number of persons turned up at Chateaubelair during the funeral service was testimony to the kind of exemplary life that he lived. Chateaubelair was alive when thousands converge at Chateaubelair for his funeral. Persons who would know Chateau well, he was buried at Fitz Hughes and when the coffin was at the Fitz Hughes cemetery the Rose Bank Steel Pan have the people at Mission Corner still going up that is to give you an idea of the length of the funeral procession. He was a person who was..., he has given yeoman service not only to North Leeward, but to St. Vincent and the Grenadines as a whole. At the time of his passing, he was the Principal of the West Wood or Coulls Hill Government School and I know the residents of that area miss him very much because since he has been there, he has been able to put a lot of things in place that the residents of the community would miss him for. So to his families and friends I want to say my deepest sympathies to Mr. Christopher George's family and may his soul rest in peace.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I think that brings us to the end of obituaries. I would of course like to acknowledge the various act of obituaries that were mentioned here by Members and particularly that of David Bonadie who has been a past Member of this Honourable House and I believe that my own tribute to him at this time and also that of the House would be to stand in one minute silence in respect of his passing.

Our next item would be congratulatory remarks but I think that we can move along swiftly with this one because time is moving quite swiftly.

CONGRATULATORY REMARKS

HONOURABLE CECIL MC KIE: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to offer congratulations to Rodcliffe, St. Vincent and the Grenadines Windward Islands and West Indies bound fast bowler Dillon Johnson [applause]. Over the past few weeks Dillon has indeed been making a name for himself in cricket in the region. In fact in the third place play off 20/20 game Windward Islands verses Barbados Dillon established a new standard, a new feat in the region when he took five wickets to five runs or four overs two of them which were maidens in that competition the best in the region ever [applause]. Dillon is a stare way fast bowler as we know it. One of many to come from St. Vincent and the Grenadines, but he has also been established himself with the bat. In fact, in the four day game Windward Islands verses Guyana he scored 51 not out and as recent as yesterday Windward Islands verses Trinidad and Tobago he also scored 40 not out. It shows that he has potential with the bat as well [applause]. I am sure that the representative of South Central Windward, Rodcliffe and St. Vincent and the Grenadines we are all very proud of Dillon and very soon we should see him wearing the whites for the West Indies Cricket Team [applause].

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I would also like to congratulate the organizing committee of the first ever KFC West St. George Primary Schools Competition. Very successful opening programme on Sunday and this I daresay in consultation with the Ministry of Education is the first step towards reestablishing primary schools cricket here in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to extend congratulations to the National Sports Council and the Ministry of Agriculture who teamed up to ensure that on the visit of the West Indies Board last Thursday that we were able to achieve an A+ grade in terms of our preparation for hosting the three one day internationals [applause] West Indies versus Australia. I know a number of persons have been expressing some concerns, but the West Indies Cricket Board they have confirmed that we are in fact ready to host those three one day internationals on the 16th, 18th and 20th of March, the first ever that a country in the Caribbean would have achieved the success of hosting three back to back one day internationals [applause]. We must be doing something right here in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and congratulations to the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Cricket Association. What we have to do now is to ensure that we are ready as a nation in terms of going out and supporting those games so that we will continue to achieve the attention of the West Indies Cricket Board in terms of hosting one day international and other games here in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to extend congratulations to the Bequia Blues Fest Committee as well as the Mustique Committee for putting on successful events in the month of January and as I understand it thousands of persons, locals and visitors would have gathered for those two activities another success story and they are now permanent fixtures in terms of the cultural calendar of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and I wish them every success as they continue to expand and develop those programmes on those islands.

I would also like to express congratulations to Ms. Rene Baptiste and her delegation of 15 recently visiting Cuba on the book exhibition down there. I think they represented St. Vincent and the Grenadines with excellence. They had Cuba rocking in many cases and they chose what we can achieve. It is an avenue for us to continue to promote our country in cultural sporting and the arts forms and we have to continue to support these efforts.

To Fireman Hooper, a wonderful performance in Trinidad and Tobago in the Soca Fest down there and I think that we have the potential here to one day very soon take the first position in that Soca competition in Trinidad and Tobago. And finally, Mr. Speaker, [Interjection] oh that is power Soca [laughter] power Soca and finally, Mr. Speaker, I think we have the opportunity as we have done in the sectors of agriculture as well as tourism to ensure that we take the opportunity to progress our sporting and our cultural artistes so that we can have possibly a third productive sector in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. We have the potential to achieve that and I want to wish all who are participating in these various fields all the best. Thank you very much.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for West Kingstown.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Mr. Speaker, on the 9th February a young man celebrated a birthday, his name is Frederick Beache. Mr. Beache hails originally from Greiggs and has been living with his beloved daughter in Campden Park for very many years. It may very well be that Mr. Beache is the oldest living person in this country. Mr. Speaker, when I had the honour of visiting him with some friends as I have done on a normal occasions over the years, Mr. Beache was in his usual life spirit. He is an amazing petite man, petite, petite only and stature and build, but at the age of 107 he is still in control of all of his faculties. In fact, although his sight and his hearing are somewhat reduced, he still have the use of them without any..., he is able to move about if he wants to on his own. But what I found most interesting is his sense of humour and on many

occasions I will visit with him and he will not refuse to have a sip of wine with me and with those who come to visit him. But indeed when one of the female members of the delegation offered to come and give him a bath and a rub, a very young lady who sat next to him his eyes lit up and he said, oh yes indeed, but what I found to express the kind of humour that Mr. Beache has the young lady in looking at his hair and admiring it and saying what a charmer he must have been when he was a younger person, he looked back and he said, yes, you know you can come and rub my knees and all of that, but he added, you will have to pay me for the honour [laughter] that is the nature of the man. Very humorous, kindhearted, his dear daughter who has been looking after him for a number of years there in Campden Park and the rest of the family are very proud of him. We certainly wish him continued good health and happiness, 107 years on the 9th February 107.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for South Central

HONOURABLE SABOTO CAESAR: Mr. Speaker, I also rise to share in the joys of the Beache family of Greiggs as we celebrate 107 years strength and happiness in the Beaches family as they celebrate with Frederick “Daddy Pal” Beache. Mr. Speaker, if I may just go in to some of my experiences with Daddy Pal and some of the records given to me by his children. Mr. Frederick “Daddy Pal” Beache was born in 1905. Mr. Beache more affectionately known as “Daddy Pal” is a staunch member of the Anglican Church and now attends the church of Transfiguration in Lowmans Leeward. He has lived in Santa Domingo where he was a tradesman. He lived also in Kingstown, in Calder, in Georgetown, in Bequia and also in Greiggs where he would have settled and married and had his children, seven children, six of which are alive today. His wife Gennetta now deceased, she died approximately 15 years ago, I was advised.

Daddy Pal also served as a layman and sexton at St. Marks Anglican Church in Greiggs, yes, he was also a skilled lumber jack, a carpenter, a mason, a basket weaver and a scout man. A full artisan was he in his days. Mr. Beache currently lives in Lowmans Leeward with his daughter and her husband and he is also still active, very active as was mentioned and in his full memory. He is always in a jovial mood and I can attest that once you meet this man at 107 you are wondering if it is somebody in the age of 45 or 35, he is sometimes even more jovial than some young persons and definitely he has a recipe for living I think will benefit a lot of us, he shares it with us.

This year family members and well wishers and church members of the church of Transfiguration shared in his thanksgiving service four days before his birthday which was also attended by the Bishop of the Windward Islands, the very Reverend Leopold Friday. I remember when my great grandmother turned 103 the excitement and joy in the family and whilst the Honourable Member for West Kingstown noted that Daddy Pal is probably one of the oldest persons in St. Vincent and the Grenadines I would also like to say he is probably one of the oldest men in the Caribbean and definitely one of the old persons in the world.

It would also be remiss of me if I do not congratulate Dillon Johnson. You know he is a very humble young man. A man who has earned his respect not only on the field but also off the field and I can recalled reading the newspaper and seeing that I think is a Vincentian made a mistake that he is from the constituency of North Central Windward, but I could remember meeting the young man and for those of us who know the border very well between North Central and South Central that are call “Firebun” [laughter].

You see, I knew that the discussion would have gone much further because even in my searchings I recognized that even though he was born in South Central that his mother probably met his father in North Central, he attended primary school in North Central and also his mother is from North Central, but she is teaching in South Central. So there is always this tug of war especially for those who follow the politics between the boundaries of North Central and South Central and there are some of us here even in the gallery who know about those boundaries very well [laughter]. The Prime Minister has in a very benevolent way said that he has enough to give me. Well I must say to the Honourable Prime Minister that provided that all remains equal, I may have to give somebody else. Congratulations to all. Thank you.

HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I too join in the congratulations to Daddy Beache. As was said he was an Anglican, he was from the Parish St. Matthew, Biabou which is Sylvans Stubbs and St. Marks Greiggs. I can recall as a young man going to several harvests from the Parish that, as a young boy, sorry, 1979 up to the early '80s and so when we had an English Priest called "Father Stephen Taylor" who is now in Brazil as the Archdeacon in Brazil. Johnny sunshine, daddy Beache, Mr. Coban and so on were part of the men's fellowship, but whenever there was a harvest in Greiggs they would not be at the church, they would be at Johnny sunshine's shop and when the harvest come to Biabou they would go up to Sagga Pinto's shop and when it goes to Stubbs they would go to the shop for an old man who lived just above the church. So Father Stephen Taylor referred to the men's fellowship as a "men follow shop".

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the only fitness group in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the Biabou Fitness Group on their third anniversary. Mr. Speaker, this a group of mostly returning residents and persons over the age of 60, 70, 80 who are involved in this fitness training programme with the health promotion unit every single Thursday from 1 to 3 in the afternoon and they constantly Mr. Speaker, they never miss up, they never let up and so last Sunday they celebrated their third anniversary with a thanksgiving service and they said to me if you did not go to the Parliament today and mention our name, you cannot come back to Biabou. So I have to do that, Mr. Speaker, to congratulate their executive and the members of this fitness group. I know when Minister Mc Kie was the Minister of Health he had promised to go and see them twice and he did not turn up one day, they called me and I said to him, whatever you are doing you have to come to Biabou because these ladies and these gentlemen who are part of this fitness group would never forgive you. So he eventually turned up one day and they were so overjoyed to see him and he is still waiting to have his fitness group started. So I want to congratulate that fitness group on their third anniversary. I am much obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Oh, all right, okay Honourable Senator Frederick and then we have Senator Francis and I suppose that might be it.

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK: Yes, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I think it would be remiss of us not to bring to the attention of the Parliament a fantastic accomplishment in so far as the Grammy Awards is concerned. For the first time a Vincentian in the person of Raymond Williams formed part of trio to win the technical Grammy Award for his work in audio engineering the programme call 'Meladine' and he is from Chateaubelair and he is a member of my family by marriage and so I think it would be remiss of me not to indicate that St. Vincent now has bragging rights internationally to declare that a national of St. Vincent and the

Grenadines and a resident until age 14 when he migrated from Chateaubelair is given a technical Grammy Award which he was presented with some weeks ago. Much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Senator Francis.

HONOURABLE SENATOR JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Senator surely kept her wedding secret. You said he was your family by marriage.

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK: Yes, not my own marriage. My sister's.

HONOURABLE SENATOR JULIAN FRANCIS: Oh, I see [laughter], because if that was so I would have offered congratulations this morning that was the intention.

Mr. Speaker, this Honourable House was to have met last week 21st February but was postponed to today 28th February and an event happened in 1994, on the 20th February 1994 this House was without opposition, not even a senator was named and the NDP had ruled supreme from 1989 until 20th February 1994; 15 nil and then on the 21st February 1994 there was General Elections and a young man of 48 years age got elected to this Parliament along with two older citizens to represent the Unity Labour Party and to break the stranglehold of the New Democratic Party. I rise to offer congratulations to our Prime Minister, the political leader of the Unity Labour Party and the leader of the House for being in this House elected straight for 18 years [applause]. Mr. Speaker, the old people say, story day fo talk but time nah day, so I would not take you into a long history of how we came to winning that election in 1994 that was for a different occasion. I hope it would not come very quickly but I honestly want this morning, Mr. Speaker, to on behalf of Members of this side and I am sure and the other side, he is the longest serving member in this House right now and I want to extend congratulations on behalf of our organisation to him.

You do not happen to become a man until you are 18 years of age. Your father tells you that right; oh he is now a man in politics having been there for 18 years. Congratulations Prime Minister on your achievement and may you stay in this Honourable House for a long time to come. Thank you.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for the Northern Grenadines.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Mr. Speaker, just quickly I wish to join with the Honourable Minister of Sports to congratulate the organizers of the Bequia Music Fest, the Bequia Tourism Association and the individual in the name of Wilfred Bidrock who worked tirelessly to bring this event to a successful conclusion every year and it has been getting more and more supporters we have said over and over in this Honourable House. It may well be, Mr. Speaker, that the success that this event has achieved is an indication that the time has come when some more effort and support must be made to enhance the organizing and to provide some support in terms of personnel in the interim in between the various festivals. Because speaking with people who are involved in the organizing, the growth of it has become really a demanding task and the high standards that they set, Mr. Speaker, is what they would want to maintain. So I hope that in the future that there would be some assistance in that regard or thought be given to providing the kind of materials

and personnel support and space and so on for the operation of that committee because it is doing important work not just in culture on the part of tourism. It is putting a very successful event on every year which will grow from strength to strength. So I want to give them my congratulations, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Members of this side of the House and to wish them all their success and to encourage them to continue to work very, very hard in making the event next year even bigger and most successful than this year. Thank you.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much Honourable Members. Let us move on.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the Sitting held on Tuesday 13th December, 2011 and the Sittings between 9th and 13th January, 2012, copies of which had previously been circulated were taken as read and confirmed with no amendment.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: No particular announcements.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, there are two matters I would like address very briefly, one concerns the removal of St. Vincent and the Grenadines from a blacklist. On February 16th, 2012 St. Vincent and the Grenadines was formally notified by the office of the European and International Affairs of the French Tax Policy Directorate in France that this country was removed from the French list of none cooperative jurisdictions as of January 2012.

The Ministry of Finance of St. Vincent and the Grenadines welcomes the removal from the French Blacklist of tax havens as it considers that there was no merit in placing St. Vincent and the Grenadines on such a list in the first place. In 2010 France quote unquote blacklisted 18 countries around the world as being uncooperative tax havens, countries that fail to cooperate on tax issues and advised that it would be imposing punitive taxes on French companies operating in these jurisdiction. St. Vincent and the Grenadines was among nine Caribbean countries which France, quote unquote blacklisted, these included Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis and St. Lucia.

France's action to blacklist countries which it viewed as non-cooperative followed an initiative by the organization of economic cooperation and development (OECD) the official international body with oversight of international tracks transparency. To label countries under, quote unquote the black, grey, or white list

depending on their level of tax cooperation. Though France is a member of the OECD its action to compile its own quote unquote blacklist was unilateral and separate from the actions taken by the OECD.

Honourable Members may recall that St. Vincent and the Grenadines like several other Caribbean countries were grey listed by the OECD in April 2009 as being a country which had permitted to the international tax standards of transparency but which had not demonstrated its commitment. In less than a year thereafter, our country was removed from the OECD's grey list as it had completed the requisite number of Tax Information Exchange Agreements (TIEAs) ,over 12, in order to illustrate its commitment to tax transparency and exchange.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines and France signed a Tax Information Exchange Agreement in April 2010, which allowed each party to exchange information relating to the enforcement of tax offences and the administration of tax laws. By July 2010 St. Vincent and the Grenadines had completed its internal procedures for the entry into force of this agreement. France quote unquote blacklisted St. Vincent and the Grenadines when negotiations had already commenced and were ongoing between both countries for the establishment of a TIEA. St. Vincent and the Grenadines has no history of being uncooperative with France, but appears to have qualified for inclusion on the blacklist by reasons of operating an International Financial Services Industry. St. Vincent and the Grenadines at this time would have already completed 18 TIEAs more than the number required to meet international standards.

Since March 1st 2010, I wrote in my capacity as Prime Minister and Minister of Finance the France's President, Nicolas Sarkozy and the French Minister of Finance requesting the removal of our country from the blacklist. St. Vincent and the Grenadines remained on the French blacklist even though the OECD had quote unquote white listed St. Vincent since March 2010. France has now officially acknowledged that St. Vincent and the Grenadines can be removed from its blacklist. In November, 2011 our country enacted, this Parliament enacted, the International Cooperation Tax Information Exchange Act of 2011 to further enhance our country's Tax Information Exchange Regime and to ensure that the appropriate legislative framework exists, but giving effect to international agreements in relation to tax information exchange. It appears as though the left hand in France did not know what the right hand was doing and this is why we ended up on their so-called blacklist. And I want to make this point, countries like our own must always be on guard to maintain their sovereignty and independence and anything which seeks to derogate from the juridical capacity of our states as sovereign independent nation we must be careful and we must also be very careful, those who are in opposition and those who want to score political points across the country, not to tamper with the juridical basis of our sovereignty and independence, because this is something which is of critical importance to us to stand up and to be counted in the committee of nations and it reflects on all of these matters.

We made our position very clear in relation to France at the time. I notice elections are coming on in France and we have the drum beat again of non-cooperative jurisdictions and also quote unquote a French blacklist and I see several Caribbean countries they have on it. I do not call their names today. St. Vincent is not one among them, but the countries..., among the countries listed are countries which are recognized generally speaking to have quote unquote clean offshore jurisdictions or International Financial Jurisdictions. But there are some people in Europe, does not matter what is their philosophical position, whether they are social democrats as the case of former Prime Minister Gordon Browne in the United Kingdom, or like President, Sarkozy towards the

right, towards the right wing in France, they hold the same position. It is as though people are looking for excuses for the meltdown in their own countries in the United States and Europe with a lack of proper regulation and all the like, they try and blame other people for their problems. But we have had nothing to do with the crash of international capitalism. We have had nothing to do with that. We have had to bear the consequences.

So when I speak on an issue like this and there are persons who try to pretend that large countries do not want to see us in a disadvantageous position and who might be inclined to belittle our sovereignty and independence, I urge them to rethink and I give them the benefit of my long years of study of history and my experience as Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines for the last 11 years.

Mr. Speaker, in short, Mr. Speaker, when we are addressing these countries, we should be as one and do not have the petty divisions among us. Mr. Speaker, I want to inform this Honourable House about a letter which I wrote on the 13th February, just over five weeks ago to the Lord Bishop of the Anglican Church, Bishop Leopold Friday, Chairman of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Christian Council and to indicate that he requested to see me yesterday and brought a delegation from the Christian Council including himself, monsignor Knight and Mr. Godfrey Samuel who is an official in the Christian Council to discuss this letter. The letter reads as follows, the subject is “the growing threat of secularism”, but it addresses also, Mr. Speaker, the matter of reconciliation and the matter of Muslim Christian Dialog. Three questions not touching on bread and butter, but are important to our way of life and which with touch and bread and butter issues at the second removed.

Dear Bishop Friday,

Recently the Biddeford Town Council in Devon, Britain lost its fight to hold prayers at the start of its meetings, after the High Court found in favour of an atheist who said he was quote unquote embarrassed listening to prayers when he was a member of the Council. This is so despite the fact that the Council had voted on the issue twice and had decided to keep their prayers, but the ruling of the High Court summarily put paid to the democratic decision of the Council. This is a troubling decision given the fact that the law court in the Eastern Caribbean look to the rulings of High Court and Court of Appeal in England as persuasive though not conclusive precedence. This decision of the High Court in England follows a number of legal judgments which points to a growing secularism in that country and the validation of this virtually unrestrained condition by the English Courts.

We have read for example of a British Airways worker Nadia Eweida, being sent home for failing to conceal a small cross, a symbol of Christianity. So too the defeat at the Appellate level of a Christian, Ms. Lillian Ladele, a Registrar in the London Burrow of Islington who had requested to be excused from officiating on the matrimonial proceedings of civil partnerships. The Islington Council refused her request and commenced disciplinary proceedings against her. She unsuccessfully applied to the law courts for relief on the basis of religious discrimination. The Court of Appeal held that marriage was not a core value of Christianity and that Lillian

Ladele was being unreasonable., wanted to get marry in a civil ceremony and she did not want to take part and she was disciplined. She went to the High Court, it ended up in the Court of Appeal for relief, she did not get the relief. The letter goes on which I have written to the Christian Council and other members of the Clergy in this country.

Other disturbing examples of this rush to unbridled secularism, including the interviewing of the Bishop of Chester by the police for expressing his views on homosexuality. The suspension of a nurse simply by offering to pray for a patient and the disciplining of a medical doctor by the general medical council was sharing his faith with a patient. In the United States of America, the country profoundly influential in shaping our region's values has established a wall between church and state and has authoritatively endorsed a bundle of stances on socio-religious issues which are antithetical to Christianity and offensive to the tried and tested values of our Caribbean Civilization.

Various authorities in the USA have adopted their extreme secular postures, clothed in the garment of tolerance, modernity and individual choice. The knock on social dangers to us in St. Vincent and the Grenadines is real and immediate. In our country the preamble to our constitution reaffirm that our nation is founded on the belief in the Supremacy of God and the freedom and dignity of man. Over the years a sensible balance has evolved between church and state, between community religious beliefs and individual choice and between collective activities grounded in a Christian ethos and individual or group tolerance.

For example in St. Vincent and the Grenadines we commence the meetings of Parliament with prayers and we do so weekly at the start of Cabinet Meetings, public functions routinely begin with prayers and the singing of our National Anthem. At public schools we pray daily, similarly, nurses and others pray with patients at our hospitals and clinics, those who are non-believers are not forced to participate in prayers, indeed, no one is. It is a voluntary activity. Rightly we accept all this as proper, but I fear that judicial challenges elsewhere may become copycat precedence in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The churches must thus be on guard and avoid complacency even as we celebrate our continued rights, privileges and good sense. In the process, our churches ought not to marginalize a public expression of public faith or more properly the expression of faith publicly.

On a related matter, I am pleased that there is a growing awareness in the Christian community of the necessity and desirability for Christian Muslim Dialog, regionally and internationally. To deepen understanding and bolster peace. This dialog does not obviate the requirement for evangelism among Jews and Gentiles allied, to use the power line formulation. Meanwhile I am encouraged by the ongoing efforts of the churches to foster national reconciliation, unity, peace and love between and among persons of different political affiliations or persuasions. I thank you most sincerely. I accept that we must have faith that we can all be reconciled to truth and an avoidance of bitterness or hatred. But this faith cannot be abstract; it must be made complete or perfect in and through works.

All the best to you, your churches and congregations.

Sincerely yours,

Ralph E. Gonsalves, Prime Minister.

Mr. Speaker, we had a long discussion on these matters yesterday with the Christian Council and in particular we spent quite a bit of time on the issue of reconciliation. The Minister of Reconciliation was at another meeting and could not have been present at this one. I want to report and to thank him for submitting to the Cabinet which was approved, a document on national reconciliation, a concept, a series of ideas, and that document will be shortly circulated to all the relevant entities in the country and that the National Advisory Committee on reconciliation has been formed. A Chairman has been named by Cabinet, after quite a search for an appropriate person, so that what was announced just over a year ago as an important policy goal that we continue to work towards reconciliation, not that we are bringing to an end political competition, none of us wants to bring political competition to an end. Competitive democracy is important for the maintenance of political democracy broadly, political participation in the political system and for the strengthening of individual rights and freedoms.

Indeed, competitive democracy is the other side of the coin relating to individual rights and liberties. But we need to conduct ourselves without bitterness and hatred and without intolerance. We can do so sharply but not divisively. I know that the journey is not an easy one, I simply hope and pray that we proceed towards this goal, there would be from time to time setbacks. I say it is not an easy business, but it is important we try, particularly in this difficult and confusing world, to not make enemies over issues on which we ought not to be making enemies. But let us work as best as we possible can in the interest of everybody in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and to lift the quality of the life of our people.

Mr. Speaker, there are other matters I just want to draw to the attention of this Honourable House, but we do not have the time today. I have spoke at length on the proceedings of selling the shares of the National Commercial Bank, that is to say, 29 percentage points of the 49 percent owned by the Government. Also on matters relating to CLICO and British American and as would have been seen in the media the regional media and the local media, an important eight page letter which I sent to the CARICOM Secretary General, another [to] Heads of Government in the region on the integration movement and I have given the instructions to my staff that they be circulated to all members of this Honourable House. I am obliged.

PETITIONS

HONOURABLE MAXWELL CHARLES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to bring before this Honourable House the Humble Petition of the Trustees of the Redeemed Christian Church of God. Secondly, the Humble Petition of the Trustees of the Emmanuel Christ Gospel Church. I humbly lay them before the House, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTIONS FOR ORAL ANSWERS

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

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition is absent. I rise to ask on his behalf of the Honourable Prime Minister question 1 standing in his name.

1. *The Honourable Arnhim Eustace (Leader of the Opposition), asked the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Economic Development, Airport and Seaport Development, Grenadines and Legal Affairs:*

A number of electricity consumers have had their homes and some businesses disconnected for lack of payment.

Could the Honourable Prime Minister please indicate how many consumers have been disconnected as at January 31st 2012.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Prime Minister, question number one.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I would have hoped that there would be a little more clarity to the question, but I would do the best that I can. The question assumes..., in fact, it states that persons, consumers have their homes and businesses disconnected for lack of payment. Person have disconnections for other reasons, they migrate, they asked for disconnection from one person to put it in the name of somebody else, I asked VINLEC to provide me with a list of those who were disconnected for purposes of non-payment. They informed me that their system is not configured that way and it will take them quite a while to provide me with the information. But they themselves told me that there are several reasons why persons may be disconnected. So I just want to knock that assumption out of the way, that because someone is disconnected it is because of non-payment. I understand the political mischief behind the question, so I need first of all to clarify conceptually what we are about.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, we indicate how many consumers have been disconnected as at the 31st of January 2012 from which period, in the month of January to 2012, 2011, 2010? What is the period? And of course how does this compare with other years? And what are the new connections for us to be able to get some idea. So Honourable Members can see immediately the question itself is hugely lacking in its quest for information to be presented in an intelligible form. So I shall do the best that I can in the circumstances.

Currently, there are 40,417 customers at the end of 2011. When we arrived in office, there were 30,172. So you have over 10,000 new customers. In 2011 there were 1,389 new customers and the data given to me, it says, a number of accounts remaining terminated in 2011, 885 whether they were accumulated from an earlier period I do not know. The fact is it that there are a lot more persons who come on new than the numbers who

have been terminated and those who have been terminated, I cannot tell you how many were terminated for non-payment. But I must say this, 40,417 businesses and houses that is a huge number and VINLEC tells me that the number is about 98 percent, 99 percent. It is a huge number, close to 100 percent.

I mean there are some people for instance where I have built my house up in Gorse up in the hills, I chose to go there, VINLEC charged me \$65,000 to put electricity there, I had to pay them, that is what my wife told me was the figure, \$65,000. Now if I did not have the money I would not have electricity, I mean I would not be connected that would be derogation from the 100 percent. So if we decide to go far in the hills to live, do not expect them to..., the community to pay for you there. Though of course we have had cases where individuals have insisted, because they have a vote that even though it costs you \$10,000; \$15,000 to take electricity for one person it must be taken. The fact is this we are doing a lot of connections and there clearly have been some disconnections because of non-payment. Similarly in the year 2000 I have a number in the hundreds of disconnections gone pass 300; I do not know if they were accumulated from another period or whether that was in the year 2000. So I give the data the best that I can give and I just want to say this, the policy of the Government is to provide electricity for everybody and to provide street lights.

In one area in Diamond just a few months ago, we have put six guard lights. In fact, in that area we have put 100 street lights. Just recently, consequent to a visit I made over Ottley Hall within a week we had 21 street lights and bear this in mind we are doing this while in the United states of America state governments and city governments are cutting out street lights and we are putting in [applause] it is about \$6 million we paying electricity for street lights. So the question is asked, I answer it as fully as I possibly can in the circumstances without any attempt to dissemble or leave out anything.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question No. 2.

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

A number of water consumers have had their homes and businesses disconnected for lack of payment.

Could the Honourable Prime Minister please indicate how many consumers have been disconnected as at January 31st 2012.

HONOURABLE CLAYTON BURGIN: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, disconnections are done by the CWSA sometimes at the request of the owner occupier in cases of abandoned or unoccupied properties and also as a mechanism to recover outstanding sums owed to the authority. The disconnection of consumers is usually followed by a corresponding reconnection when the outstanding sums are paid up. This reconnection may be immediate or may take days or weeks depending on the situation. The point is that disconnections and reconnections are inextricably linked and because both operations take place simultaneously by different cruise in different areas on a daily basis, the situation is never static and is constantly changing.

The question does not refer to a specific time period; however, a two months period of December defers to January 31st is used because disconnections are normally kept to a minimum in December of each year and restarted in earnest in late January. During that period the focus is on reconnections and bringing disconnected consumers back into the system. For the two month period ending January 31st 2012, 614 or 1.8 percent of the customer base was disconnected and a corresponding 635 persons paid for reconnections in those same months.

Mr. Speaker, I will now present the trend of disconnections and reconnections for the same period over the past 12 years. So I will call the disconnected figure first and then the reconnected the two months that I just mentioned January and December. In 2000 - 89 disconnected 47 reconnected. 2001 - 49 disconnected 155 reconnected. 2002 - 138 disconnected 169 reconnected. 2003 - 128 disconnected 210 reconnected. 2004 - 208 disconnected 251 reconnected; 2005 - 227 disconnected 229 reconnected; 2006 - 19 disconnected 134 reconnected; 2007 - 243 disconnected 248 reconnected; 2008 - 294 disconnected 257 reconnected; 2009 - 163 disconnected 274 reconnected; 2010 - 349 disconnected 412 reconnected; 2011 - 327 disconnected 421 reconnected. I am much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: [Inaudible.]

HONOURABLE CLAYTON BURGIN: Well I was not given those figures.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much, question No. 3.

3. *The Honourable Arnhim Eustace (Leader of the Opposition), asked the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Economic Development, Airport and Seaport Development, Grenadines and Legal Affairs:*

Could the Honourable Prime Minister please indicate the fiscal outturn as of January 31st 2012 as compared with the same period in 2011.

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

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, the total revenue and grants at the end of January 2012, \$38.7 million compared to \$26.3 million for the comparable period in 2011. Current revenue end of January 2012, \$35.1 million compared to \$26.1 million for the 2011 period comparatively. Capital revenue on grants, end of January 2012, \$3.6 million and the end of January 2011, \$0.186 million; that is \$186,000, total expenditure \$31.2 million, in the period for January 2012; \$34.06 million for the period January 2011, recurrent expenditure portion of that \$31.4 million as against \$34 million in 2011.

I just want to indicate that personal emoluments in 2012 in January went up to \$18.13 million compared to \$17.3 million for last year January. If we look at interest in terms of expenditure, the interest payments on domestic and external debt was \$1.4 million compared to \$1.9 for the proceeding January. A current account balance for 2012 is \$3.98 million compared to minus \$7.87 million for last year. The overall balance a surplus

of \$7.5 million compared to a deficit of \$7.7 million last year. You see the numbers for January as one may say look pretty okay, but one swallow does not a summer make. As I always make these point and you can have an excellent January and a February may not be quite as good or a February may be good marks, so we need a longer period to notice the trend. So that is how I will..., in addition to giving the numbers as requested to give my opinion as Minister of Finance who has been in charge of this business for the last 11 years. [Interjection] oh yes, I will. Total expenditure \$31.2 million compared to \$34 million. You want the personal emoluments or that is okay? [Interjection] that is okay, recurrent \$31.14 compare to \$34 million.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question No. 4.

4. *Dr. the Honourable Godwin Friday (Northern Grenadines), asked the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Consumer Affairs:*

Given that the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines has been sending conflicting messages concerning its position in relation to the Falkland Islands in that, on the one hand, it agreed with other CARICOM governments and the UK government at the 2012 UK-Caribbean Forum to support the principle and the right to self-determination for all peoples including the Falkland Islanders and, on the other hand, at the ALBA summit in Caracas in February 2012, it agreed to support Argentina in the dispute over the Falkland Islands and, in keeping with that support, agreed to prevent ships flying Falkland Islands flag from entering our ports:

Will the Honourable Minister please clarify the government's position in relation to the Falkland Islands dispute and indicate whether the government really intends to prevent Falkland Islands flagged vessels from docking in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines ports.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Prime Minister.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES FOR HONOURABLE DOUGLAS SLATER: Yes, the Honourable Minister is overseas and we apologise for his absence. Mr. Speaker, before I answer the question it is important for me to address the preamble, because I notice many of the questions, Mr. Speaker, have very long preambles, not necessarily factually correct in all cases and very often unless the feeling is an opportunity to state their position in relation to a preamble rather than to illicit an answer to a question. I shall try the best that I can to in both circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, CARICOM has had an opportunity in the last two years to address this question of the Falkland Islands also known as the Malvinas. At a Unity Summit of the Latin American Caribbean Countries in Mexico City in 2010 we were not represented because we were in the midst of an election campaign. CARICOM decided to adopt what is really the position taken at the United Nations and at the Organisation of American States that Argentina and Britain should go to the negotiating table on all the issues. As you are aware Britain said that it would go to the table with all the issues relating to the Falklands minus the question of a discussion on sovereignty. The position of the OAS and the position of the United Nations is that all the issues have to be

discussed. Essentially two principles collide, the principle of territorial integrity which the Argentineans claim that the Malvinas belong to them having been owned by Spain and the Malvinas came to them upon the accession of independence of Argentina from Spain. The British claimed that the people who are there are British and they want to remain British. The Argentineans say well you have them there, you have the British there for sure but other persons were there before you chase them away, so two principles collide, the principle of territorial integrity and the issue of self determination.

Now in 1982 before the Falklands war, 1981 sorry, before the Falklands war a member of the British Government, a right winger called Nicholas Ridley had proposed from the Thatcher Government that there be a leased back with Argentina and Argentina was to enter these discussions. Of course you had a dictatorship in Argentina at the time and the generals went started a war, they were defeated and since then the position of the British Government has become more intransigent not wanting to discuss anything other..., they will discuss everything else other than the issue of sovereignty and the position has become even stronger even more intransigent because it is..., there has been a preliminary conclusion that oil or natural gas is in the waters around the Falklands.

So at the OAS, at the United Nations and at the Unity Meeting in Mexico in 2010 and that Unity Meeting was a precursor to the inaugural meeting of the CELAC, the Community of States of Latin America and the Caribbean which was held in December last year in Venezuela and the similar position was held that is to say, to negotiate all the issues without taking a side, but the language in the resolution tended to favour Argentina, because it did not make any specific reference to the question of self determination.

Now you have a summit, a UK forum in Grenada between Britain and CARICOM and the Honourable Member is correct in his statement that that CARICOM statement that outcome document from Grenada makes reference to the issues specifically of self determination. In other words, a more pro British statement and it is difficult to reconcile that statement in Grenada with the statements which CARICOM members signed on to the Heads of Government, not the Foreign Ministers, Foreign Ministers dealt with it in Grenada, difficult to reconcile with what the Heads of Government had agreed to at CELAC just a few months earlier and which has been their consistent positioning in the United Nations and the OAS.

Now, I have been advised by the Foreign Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines that what was in the outcome document in Grenada was not, emphasise not, a true reflection of what CARICOM agreed upon in Grenada and that position I had been advised was also a position taken subsequently when she got back to Guyana, the Foreign Minister of Guyana and who has said that she will write CARICOM and when the CARICOM Secretary General came to me last week I spoke to him about this, he said, yes the Foreign Minister of Guyana spoke to her and said that the outcome document in Grenada was not, emphasise not, what CARICOM had agreed upon that was not the sentiment, but apparently the persons who drafted the document drafted it a particular way and either persons left before or did not pick it up and when they subsequently studied it they realise that it did not reflect the two positions. That does not reflect well on CARICOM, because as I have said and I have to be honest on this, the position in Grenada and the position in CELAC and elsewhere are inconsistent and let us be clear on that. I know what has been the consistent position of CARICOM over the

years and what has been the consistent position of the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines within the context of CARICOM.

Now we come to the issue of statement at the ALBA which is a subsequent statement and I want to read what the statement said in the relevant paragraph about flag. The Heads of State and Government of ALBA support a decision made by the countries of the region to ban ships with the colonial flag imposed on the Malvinas from entering their ports. What we agreed to here was to support the decision made by countries of the region to ban ships and the countries of the region, the Latin American Caribbean Region which had so agreed were Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Argentina, the Mercosur countries and all we were doing here is supporting the decision of those four countries to do so. It was not a decision of us to ban the ships. I explained that. The reason why we provided the support is that those four countries were coming under attack from Britain for making that decision and we say, no we support those countries.

In fact, let me make this plain that when it happened, the Secretary of State for the United Kingdom for Foreign Affairs Mr. William Hague, he said that look, you are opposing that band by these four Latin American Countries but truly speaking it is only symbolic. If they stop it going in with a Falklands flag we just change it and put up the British enzyme. And that is where the issue is. Now St. Vincent and the Grenadines and let me finally address the supportive matter in clarifying her position fully, the visit of the Falklands legislators to come here.

First of all, this Government did not invite the Falklands Legislators to come here as some persons have said. They informed the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines through the Foreign Minister here that these two legislators were coming to St. Vincent and the Grenadines and they wanted to know whether we could schedule a meeting with them that is to say, the Foreign Minister and the Prime Minister. When they came, the Foreign Minister was not in the country, the best of my recollection and that same couple of days I was chairing two meetings of the OECS Aviation Ministers and Tourism Ministers, but as I made plain to the British High Commissioner I did not refuse to see them because of any scheduling problem that is what an official in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs told them. I told them the truth. The persons in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, not the Minister wanted to tell them something which was diplomatic. The British are our friends; I am not going to go around in any diplomatic circles. I am going to tell you the truth why I am not seeing you, why I did not see you, see the two people from the Falklands.

When the senior official in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs came to see me, the Foreign Minister was out at the time and so too was the Permanent Secretary. I was acting as Foreign Minister. Anytime I do not assign any portfolio to anybody when a Minister is absent I act because there are three positions constitutionally which exist, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance and the Attorney General. The Constitution gives the Governor General on my advice the authority to appoint other Ministers, but if there is no Minister present at the time I am the Minister in my capacity as Prime Minister though I may assign somebody else in that period. So if there is no assignment I am the person responsible.

Now I note the Leader of the Opposition said, Mr. Speaker, that I only said that I was not going to visit them..., I was not going to see them after I went to Caracas and came back, I said, no before I went to Caracas, you must get the timing right. I am not a weak leader you know. I do not put water in my mouth you know when I am talking on matters of principles, others may do that and hide and duck I do not do that. You take me as you find me and I present an intellectually and powerful argument base on principle. You may disagree with it, but I have a position. Now when the lady from Foreign Affairs came to see me to ask me about an appointment, a scheduling of an appointment, I asked her the simple question. What is the juridical basis upon which you are requesting that I see two legislators from a colonial assembly? She said, she did not quite follow. I said; well let me explain by way of an analogy. I say, if the Premier of Montserrat wishes to see the Prime Minister of Canada because it is a colony (Montserrat) the British Government must first give the Premier of Montserrat permission. Now clearly the British give these two legislators permission to come to see sovereign Governments, but then that is only part of the equation. Britain cannot assume that because they come here that they will see me and before you ask for an appointment in terms of the scheduling there is an issue of permission which must first be granted that I agree to see them. That is not what the diplomatic note asked for. The diplomatic note assumed that I would see them. How can you make an assumption about the Prime Minister of a sovereign country to see two persons from a colonial legislature whom I did not invite? Because if the Premier of Montserrat they continue the analogy want to see the Prime Minister of Canada, a mere diplomatic note or scheduling would not suffice. There has to be a prior document to the Prime Minister or the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Canada would you be amenable to see a Premier of a colony to discuss A, B or C? That was not done in my own case. Then I hear the Leader of the Opposition say, Mr. Speaker, that that is arrogance. That is not arrogance that is a simple question of defending the sovereignty and independence of this country and Mr. Speaker, may I just say this, I did not so define it you know, I did not so define it.

In 1648 in the Treaty of Westphalia at the conclusion of the thirty years war the state became a principal unit in international affairs and it is that Treaty that you mark the clothing of it with sovereignty and independence and that position has been articulated throughout the centuries and is enshrined in the charter of the United Nations of which we are a member. People believe that running Government is like being President of the Football Federation or being President of an NGO or something like that, no, I will show you something, two colonial legislators came, and the British High Commissioner himself did not consider it worth his while to come to St. Vincent. He sent somebody lower down the totem pole. So what am I? I am the President of the Fitness Club in Biabou? Now those who wish to say that I am arrogant can say that [Interjection] eh? Not that I should not join, that is a separate question. I am with you now and I will submit to the President of the Fitness Club and I may do that particularly when I am out in Gorse.

Now Mr. Speaker, much has been made and I am saying it for the regional press too that the Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda and the Prime Minister of Dominica back track from this proposition which I just read in plain language what it means, what I understood it to mean, I do not know what they retracted from, what I do know is this, the British High Commissioner called me and said to me that Foreign Minister Timerman of Argentina is reported as saying that the Prime Ministers of Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica and St. Vincent and the Grenadines spoke to him in Caracas about baning ships, the Falklands ships and that the Prime Minister of Antigua has issued a statement saying that is not the case and whether I will make such a statement. I told him

that I am not and St. Vincent is not the battering ram for British Foreign Polices vis-a-vis and Argentina that we are excellent friends with Britain and we are building good relations with Argentina. I say, I have not seen the statement in which you refer and I do not answer things just so in the press, I say, if the Argentinean Foreign Minister are to write me to thank me for speaking to him in a particular way, if I did not so speak to him I would write him and tell him that I did not so speak to him. But you cannot ask me what am I, a water carrier? Am I one of those in the city of Ai who resisted Joshua and therefore permanently remains a hewer of wood and carrier of water. No, never [Interjection] yes, and if the good Lord were ever to make the Honourable Member for North Leeward in the unlikely event to come here and sit down sometime after I am dead, I hope, I hope that you would learn from what I am saying. So all I am asking...

I cannot ask..., you think the High Commissioner in the United Kingdom could call the British Prime Minister and ask the British Prime Minister to make a statement in relation to a press statement made by some foreign Minister from some other country not in the interest of St. Vincent and the Grenadines? You think he could be so rude and out of place? Britain is bigger than St. Vincent and the Grenadines and more powerful, but in juridical terms I am no lesser Prime Minister than the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom [applause]. I know I born up the road, I am a country boy from Colonarie and some who do not like that idea may find this statement unpalatable, but I make it and I can defend it from the Treaty of Westphalia to the United Nations Charter and beyond. Does it mean that you do not have in practice inequality of states? Of course, that is why I always prefer it and say juridically. I am obliged.

SUPPLEMENTARY

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Well it is really, the second part of my question was not answered. Well let me repeat it again, it says, and indicate whether the government really intends to prevent Falkland Islands flagged vessels from docking in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines ports. The answer indicated that the decision that was made was to support those four countries in their decision, but I want to know if we are going to ban flag ships from coming to us.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: There are two things here, first of all, the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines does not act in vain, does not act in vain in that sense we are a..., in an alga sense is like a court of law, we do not act in vain. If I did not make a statement saying that I am baning ships from entering St. Vincent and the Grenadines we have an open seas policy. We are not at war with anybody. Why do I now have to say that I am allowing Falklands ship, ask me if I am allowing Argentinean ship, yes, Falklands, British everywhere and as a flag state we are interested unless we are at war in ships moving.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me say one further thing, when I said earlier that we have a relationship, we have a strong relationship with the British Government and we are building one with Argentina as we are doing with other countries in Latin America because the world is not the same, the British Armed Forces can board a vessel carrying a Vincentian flag on the high seas. Argentina cannot do that, we have done so by Treaty arrangement with the British and we have declared them for the purposes of going on our ships in a visiting military power on our ships.

The situation when we arrived was that Britain like everybody else had to seek permission. I remember in 2001 I am visiting the Lewis Punnett Home, the British Government from London got me on the telephone wanting to get permission because they wanted to board a vessel which had come out from East Africa with a load of sugar had stopped off in the Yemen and it is believed that terrorist was aboard and they wanted to board them in the high seas before they reached British waters because they were going to unload at the Tate and Lyle Dock in Britain. I gave permission on the telephone and indicated to them that if they wanted any other documentation to supplement the telephone call I can provide that.

Now if a similar situation were to appear now they will board and their obligation is to inform me. I have made such arrangements with Canada, with US, with France, why, because I want to protect my flag and particularly what is happening out in Somalia. The person who holds the office of Prime Minister, they hold a principled position but that principle shines like a beacon amidst a series of practical measures which are intertwined which do not derogate from our sovereignty and independence.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question No. 5 Honourable Member from the Northern Grenadines.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Mr. Speaker, I wish I could have asked a second supplementary.

5. *Dr. the Honourable Godwin Friday, Member of Parliament for the Northern Grenadines asked the Honourable Minister of Housing, Informal Human Settlements, Physical Planning, Lands and Surveys:*

What is the status of the land use plan that was prepared by the Planning Department concerning government lands at Paget Farm Bequia, near the J.F. Mitchell Airport, with the aim of providing for industrial and commercial activities in that area and, in particular

a. has the plan been approved by Cabinet; and

b. does the government intend to proceed with development of the area in accordance with the plan and if so when.

HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL: Mr. Speaker, Cabinet granted approval for the Gellicieux local area plan in 2011 that is the land use plan that is being referred to. This plan, Mr. Speaker, was prepared by the town planner and the staff at the Physical Planning Unit within the Ministry of Housing, Informal Human Settlements, Lands and Surveys and Physical Planning. Mr. Speaker, the plan was forwarded to Cabinet after three town hall meetings and several consultations and further the plan was available for public viewing at various locations at Bequia as well as the Physical Planning Unit within the Ministry.

Mr. Speaker, the plan now forms part of the guiding policy for land use on that part of Bequia. Mr. Speaker, this ULP administration will undoubtedly proceed with the development of the area and all applications for

development in this regard will therefore be evaluated on their conformity with the tenants of the plan. I am much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

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

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Mr. Speaker did the Honourable Member say when or just that they plan to do something.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: He said they will proceed.

HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL: We would proceed in relation to the applications as it relates to the overall plan so that if in the area of industry or the application will be made and so..., the applications will be assessed and so on and we will look at it and see.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: So then person can proceed to make applications to the Ministry Planning on behalf of..., in accordance with the plan for use of the lands in the area [Interjection] that is important.

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

6. *Dr. the Honourable Godwin Friday, Member of Parliament for the Northern Grenadines asked the Honourable Minister of Education:*

Now that Learning Resource Centres have been built in most constituencies in the country but not yet in the Northern Grenadines, will the Minister state whether the government intends to build a Learning Resource Centre in Bequia where such a facility is urgently needed and if so, when.

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, Government promised that in its third term that a Learning Resource Centre would be built in Bequia. I wish to reiterate that this Government delivers on its promise with time. Learning Resource Centres have already been built and I count 13 of them. Adult Education Centres were also established at Glen and Westwood and in line for construction we have Lowman's Hill, Lodge Village and Troumaca.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for the Northern Grenadines speaks of the urgency of a Learning Resource Centre but in the meantime much work is done in education while we await the building of the Learning Resource Centre. The Adult Education Centre in Bequia is in need of repairs and drawings are already completed by the Ministry of Transport and Works, but I wish to let us know that there is work in progress in Adult and continuing education in basic literacy and numeracy, computer classes, English A at CCSLC and Math at CSEC and last year the Paget Farm Library was upgraded through partnership with the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the Australian High Commission and the Northern Grenadines Community Development Inc.

Mr. Speaker, the word urgency, we as a Government, we put priority on education and on health and this has asked me to tell us that the clinic at Port Elizabeth the Government has seen it as being urgent and it is being constructed right now at a cost of \$716,862. The hospital in Port Elizabeth under the BNTF programme will be upgraded at an approximate cost of \$1,022,200 we cannot in this dry season forget Union Vale water project built at an overall cost of \$232,000. Mr. Speaker, I am obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question No. 7 Honourable Member for the Southern Grenadines.

7. *The Honourable Terrance Ollivierre (Southern Grenadines), asked the Honourable Minister of Social Development, Youth and Sports:*

The Clifton Playing field has deteriorated over the years and is in need of improvement to facilitate the development of sports and the health and wellness of the people of Union Island, and given that the government has promised to grade the playing field and improve this facility for the benefit of the community, will the Honourable Minister please state:

- a. *if any improvement will be done to repair this facility in 2012;*
- b. *whether efforts be made to improve the surface of the playing field to allow safe use of the field for various sports such as soccer, cricket and rounder, and*
- c. *will efforts be made to ensure that the field is cut regularly to facilitate its use by students and the community.*

HONOURABLE CECIL MC KIE: Mr. Speaker, in 2011 the National Sports Council had on its work schedule upgrades to that facility in Union Island, but upon request of the community down there that project was put on hold as the community was expected to host cricket games against a visiting team from overseas. Later in the year there were challenges with the equipment and that project was unable to be completed. In 2012 this year the Sports Council has committed to complete that project in terms of the upgrade to that facility and they will be working along with the management committee that has been put in place down there to look after that facility.

In fact, over the recent years the Ministry has appointed Mr. Christopher Adams for the first time ever as the sports officer on Union Island, the first ever that was done and in fact, Mr. Adams, he has already done tremendous work in terms of working with the young people on Union Island and they have began two series already. In fact, Mr. Adams he has always kept in close contact with the National Sports Council and he indicates from time to time when the field needs some attention in terms of cutting. So I am sure that before the year is concluded that the necessary works upon the commitment of the National Sports Council will be effective to that facility. I am much obliged.

8. *The Honourable Terrance Ollivierre, Member of Parliament for the Southern Grenadines asked the Honourable Minister of Education:*

In light of the fact that the parents of students from Mayreau in the quest to obtain better access to secondary education, defray accommodation and other social costs and reduce the rate of secondary school drop-outs have contracted a local private boat operator to transport children to and from Union Island on a daily basis,

Will the Honourable Minister please state if she will ensure that assistance is given to parents of the affected students so that the students would be able to continue to travel to Union Island daily to attend secondary school, and if so, how soon can parents and students expect such financial assistance.

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, the Ministry of Education in its quest to help the children of our state to gain universal access to Secondary Education undertook an exercise with the Ministry of Transport and works.

- a. See the problems that face our students getting to school regularly and punctually and
- b. The quest of transportation to Government and to the parents.

On mainland St. Vincent, we looked at the following route. We looked at South Rivers to Marriaqua, Diamonds to Marriaqua, South Rivers to Kingstown, Dickson to Kingstown, Chateaubelair to Kingstown, Owia to Sandy Bay, Fancy to Sandy Bay, Fancy to Georgetown, Sandy Bay to Georgetown, Vermont to Campden Park, Barrouallie to Campden Park. Mr. Speaker, our further investigations show that currently there are 16 students from Mayreau attending the Union Island Secondary School. Several students would have passed the Common Entrance Examinations received a one off grant of \$US300.00 from an overseas organisation to defray cost associated with their attendance at Secondary School. This is administered by the school.

Monthly ferry transport \$200.00; Bus Fare to and from the school for lunch \$50.00; lunch \$60.00; transportation for ferry berth to school monthly \$60.00; transport costs for nine months \$3,330 and the grant amounts to \$801.00 so the financing gap is \$2,529. Mr. Speaker, we looked at the reports from the school for each child and concluded that a meeting be held with parents. The problems I regret to say are many. Our analysis shows that parents have to take a whole day off from work to come to Union Island. They are required to pay \$60.00 return fare on the fast ferry or \$30.00 return fare on Glenroy Adam's boat. Mr. Speaker, most issues have to wait until the parents can make themselves available and this takes away from the significance of the impact of solutions and outcomes. The Principal went to Mayreau along with the school's Secretary and one other member of staff to conduct a parent meeting on Monday 20th February, 2012. The Ministry of Education awaits the report on that meeting to further guide through to the way forward. Honourable Member, I would like to say in conclusion that it is a work in progress and after examining all our findings, Cabinet will make a decision. Mr. Speaker, I am obliged.

9. *The Honourable St. Clair Leacock, (Central Kingstown), asked the Honourable Minister of Transport and Works:*

In my last effort to raise assistance for residents of Largo Heights who live along side or have to traverse the river to get to their homes, I requested assistance with crossings (bridges) for these inconvenienced citizens. The Honourable Minister offered then technical advice especially with respect to the civil works. Consistent with a well established public administration approach of basic needs and the tested success of community development champion the late Levi Latham:

Will the Honourable Minister now commit to contribute materials in the form of cement, blocks, aggregate and steel so that through their voluntary effort these said residents can construct another three (3) river crossings this year in a similar manner to the downstream success of others.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, I recall offering technical advice, I do not know if that offer was taken up. These crossings, Mr. Speaker, I told you would have to come under the supervision of technical offices of the Ministry and this is where the technical adviser comes, so that to ask a broad question as to whether I would give materials for the construction of the bridge we first have to assess what is being built. So a broad question and I cannot issue a policy statement that we issue materials or construction by self help because you refer to Levi Latham. There is the Ministry of Social Development who deals with that. It is not the policy of the Government to have Public Works give out material to build things. But in the spirit of which you are advancing this the matters can be looked at as to the need for these crossings. I mean going for three and giving materials for three crossings would put us in a... would be setting a very serious precedent for other communities who will say, well Leacock, sorry, Central Kingstown Parliament Representative come to Parliament and ask for materials and the Minister of Works agreed to give material, yes and then the whole system, the Honourable Representative for North Leeward will then come and ask for materials, the Honourable Member for West Kingstown, Northern Grenadines and therefore what would happen [Interjection] yes, well then chaos would take over.

We have institutions of the Government that deal with these things. I advise the Minister that we will offer some technical assistance to the Representative for these matters, I am not aware that the technical advise offer has even been accepted, so to jump from technical advice to providing material we are aware that crossings are necessary at different locations, I do not even know the immediate locations that the Parliamentary Representative speaks of and I will ask the Chief Engineer and his staff or members of BRAGSA to visit with the Representative from Central Kingstown to see what he is speaking of and I am still open to that. But I cannot come to Parliament and give a broad commitment that I will donate material. Ministry of Works have no vote from which to donate materials. You know we can come up with a project and then we finance it. The self help of Levi Latham, I will love to see that return to St. Vincent and the Grenadines, but I really do not think it will operate in the same manner in which it operated in the days of Levi Latham.

I have known of persons who say to me that we have a drain in front of us that need cleaning and we cleaned it, but then they submit a bill for cleaning it. So that while we are prepared to assist in this manner I really do not

want to divert from the established system that there is a crossing necessary over the river up there, let the Chief Engineer and his staff go there. We try and programme it into the works for the quarter in which finances are available and get the job done.

SUPPLEMENTARY

HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: Mr. Speaker, supplementary, and I go back, Mr. Speaker, in sincerity to the advice the Honourable Prime Minister said before that if we beg for assistance then it could be considered. I mean and that is the spirit. There are no provisions, Honourable Minister, in your budget for these works this year in which I understand we have limited funds and all I am saying and let us make it bi-partisan, you have offered technical assistance before, I have cried many times to get that from your department. I am prepared to go with the offer now of the professionals in the department and you have a Representative there who has an interest in the constituency.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Just a minute.

HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: Mr. Speaker, let us..., a modality..., would the Honourable Minister be prepared to find a mechanism, would he be prepared to find a mechanism which can marry the assistance as possible out of his department, his Ministry and other Ministries such that the people of Largo Heights can better get home without the impediments in our face to having to deal with these river crossings. That is all I am asking whether he wants to give the materials, whether he wants to give technical assistance, whether he wants to ask the Ministry of Finance, whether he want to ask whoever, please that is all I am asking.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Minister, he is asking if you would find a mechanism whereby this could be accomplished.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, in his presentation he said that there is no Estimate, there is nothing included in the Estimates for works in this area, but you would not know that. If a project is developed we have a voting block. BRAGSA has \$16.5 million for works and further expenses, how do we prepare that? We prepare it on a quarterly basis. So that if three crossings are required in Central Kingstown and we are doing an assessment for the programme for that quarter we will say, okay let us build one of three crossings in Central Kingstown, there is one that is necessary at German Gutter down at North Leeward, we will do one down there or whether [Interjection] yes, so do not say in the Parliament that nothing is included in the Estimates for this work. You cannot know that until we come up with a project. When a vote is prepared on block for BRAGSA it does not go by way of projects listed, it is the allocation that is allowable and affordable through the Minister of Finance. We then pick that into getting repairs done. That is how works are carried out.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question No. 10 Honourable Minister.

HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am sure the people of Largo Height know that I am pleading on their cause.

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

Now that the 2012 Budget is approved is the Honourable Minister in a better position to state,

- a. specifically what road improvements are scheduled for Central Kingstown;*
- b. does the schedule of road repairs include restorations of any of the roads in Largo Heights, Redemption Sharpes and Green Hill that have virtually returned to their original dirt state with minimum gravel; and*
- c. how soon will relief be given to the farm communities in Green Hill just above Ryan's Shop and those beyond the Liberty Lodge, Bow Wood Mountain Road areas.*

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

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, we have stated publicly in this Parliament, the Honourable Prime Minister and myself that it is the policy of this Government to do repairs to feeder roads. The roads, and I am dealing with (c) first, the roads above Liberty lodge, Bow Wood Mountain Road areas and so on, a lot of these lands up there are owned by large landowners and leased out eh, they are not owned by a lot of the farmers who work those lands and we have to be careful how we are doing these presentations and asking for certain things to be done.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things in this country that upsets me most and I have spoken about it in this Parliament, land developers sell lands without the necessary infrastructure. Just this morning I went downstairs to get a breath of fresh air and a prominent member of the community, I will just say East St. George, is appealing to me to assist in developing the road to a family member and when I enquired, this is a recent development by a private developer or not recent, recent, but within the past couple of years. But it is continuously being done. So we have to be careful when we ask about roads to be developed. I would like to know those roads to be developed in the Bow Wood area because I happen to know some large landowners up there who had these lands for years and the reason they are not sold yet is because there is no road in it. So we have to be careful.

Now Mr. Speaker, (a) and (b) are duplicated. This question is very..., in (a) he says now that the 2012 budget is approved in the Honourable House would the Honourable Minister be in a better position to state specifically what road improvements are scheduled for Central Kingstown that is (a) and then (b) he says, does the schedule of road repairs include restorations for X, Y, and Z Largo Height area, Redemption Sharpes all that is Central Kingstown. So it is a repetition of (a).

Mr. Speaker, I explained in a previous question there are no specific roads identified. Roads in this country, there are a lot of road work to be done, but we have limited resources. I just named you the figure that BRAGSA has \$16.5 million. We do it on a quarterly basis. Right now the Leeward Highway is demanding a lot of money and the Honourable Member for North Leeward and the Honourable Member for Central Leeward and the Honourable Member for South Leeward want that given attention. I drive on it everyday and I drop in the pothole sometimes [Interjection] but what? [Interjection] well your Parliamentary Representative for Central Kingstown said that the roads in Green Hill that have virtually returned to their original dirt state with minimum gravel. I mean what an explanation, what a description to pose a question as if I am going to fix roads up there. Some of these roads have never been surfaced for the 17 years under the NDP. The Bow Wood roads were there till the years of the NDP, Milton Cato days and so on. So to tell me that roads have return to their original dirt, while the Honourable Member and I were in Grammar School in short pants those roads were in the same condition. We left Grammar School voted for different parties along the way and the road remained in the same condition.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot give the Member for Central Kingstown any specific answer as to which road will be fixed. We are preparing now a quarterly works, we have submitted our request for release of funds, when those funds are released we will know the quantum and then we will fit projects into the sums allocated. I cannot run an overdraft. I have to work within the sums allocated. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Yes.

HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: I do not think I have the microphone yet.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: You will have.

HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: I was saying I do not think I have the microphone yet, there was no sound.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Oh, oh, oh so you..., question number 11 then?

HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: No Mr. Speaker, I am proceeding with number 11, but I am going to ask for your patience Mr. Speaker. It is clear while we are here in the House is to do the people's business. That is the purpose.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay, fair enough.

HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: And we have to be with our politics, understand ultimately that is what it is about. I cannot be responsible with the fact that the Honourable Minister of Transport and Works does not represent the constituency and therefore does not have the same passion and can generalize the subject matter, but we are representatives of people and it is for me to come here and represent their interests.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Yes I understand...

HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: And I asked of him earlier, Mr. Speaker, last year and said the same thing to me.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: And we have to appear that we are representing the people.

HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: That is right and there is a budget and I have asked that...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: So could you move on to 11, move to 11 for us please.

HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: You know that is all I am asking.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Move to 11.

HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: All I am asking is for help for the people to get road conditions in their constituencies. Mr. Speaker, question 11 in my name, Mr. Speaker, is to the Honourable Minister of Health and the Environment and I will ask you permission before. I just want to say this, Mr. Speaker, because maybe during the break I will go back to the hospital, my mom of 89 years is in the hospital. She has been there for the last two months December and now we are in January, the ambulance took her there yesterday. I was in Enham last Friday and I want to pay tribute to the quality of service rendered to my mom from the nurses in Enham and I have had a similar kind of quality experience out of Sion Hill and I say that to make the point, Mr. Speaker, that she lives at Walker Piece. If I had not had the wisdom of moving her from Walker Piece to where I live at Dorsetshire Hill I would not have the benefit of access to Sion Hill and subsequently to the Enham and therefore she has had a better level of medical assistance than had she had to go down to the General Hospital and join the winding line practically speaking.

The point is Mr. Speaker and I am asking the question of 11.

11. *The Honourable St. Clair Leacock (Central Kingstown), asked the Honourable Minister of Health and the Environment:*

Until such time when Central Kingstown can have its own Health Clinic, preferably in Redemption Sharps. Can the Honourable Minister please indicate:

What special window or provision can be provided at the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital so that the residents of Central Kingstown are not disadvantaged by having to join the national queue resulting sometimes in waiting in excess of twelve (12) hours to get attendance.

HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: Mr. Speaker, let me just say quickly, you know I have been here 11 years and I have never been able to celebrate a person from Central Kingstown with 100 years. [Interjection] I do not know if they are related you know, but no one in Central Kingstown has made 100 in the last 11 years that I have been here. I have to borrow from East St. George, but that is the point, we need a medical service in Central Kingstown.

HONOURABLE CLAYTON BURGIN: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I am happy that the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown has asked this question. In so doing there is demonstrating a lack of understanding on the health care system in this blessed land of ours. Allow me Mr. Speaker, to enlighten the Honourable Member.

Health care in St. Vincent and the Grenadines is delivered by a 2/3 system of primary and secondary care. Primary care is delivered through a network of 40 health centres strategically located throughout the country and is complemented by five rural hospitals. One primary care facility is the Kingstown Clinic located just outside the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital. This health centre like all others serves a specific population which includes the population of Central Kingstown. Unlike other health centres, the Kingstown Clinic offers services of the two district medical officers on a daily basis; therefore, Mr. Speaker, everyday of the week the residents of this area are afforded the opportunity to consult with medical officers. Not only are medical services offered but a range of additional services are accessed on a daily basis including immunisation of our children, counselling services for diabetics and hypertensive, anti-natal services for pregnant women and screening services for many of our population entering the job market and leaving to go abroad to study. Also, Mr. Speaker, ambulatory services are available Monday to Friday to the residents of Central Kingstown and I am certain that as a young man and this is where the Honourable Member and his family, like so many others access care.

Mr. Speaker, secondary services are delivered at the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital, mainly through the Accident and Emergency Department. Here, Mr. Speaker, there are no cues, no East St. Georges, no Central Kingstown, no North Central Windward, care Mr. Speaker is delivered on the basis of priority not on the basis of which constituency you are from. Those whose conditions are more severe are seen first. Imagine for a moment Mr. Speaker that my Ministry was so ill advised as to say to the population, hi look, everyday between 8:00 a.m. and midday only persons from Central Kingstown have access to the Emergency Room, could you imagine what we would have created? Persons with heart attacks, strokes, asthma, road traffic accidents that are not from the Honourable Member's constituency would be left languishing or left to die if we, Mr. Speaker were to fulfil the wishes of the Honourable Member.

Mr. Speaker, this Government is far too responsible and people oriented to allow such a cold and callous act to occur. Mr. Speaker, persons in the constituency of Central Kingstown access care at the Kingstown Health Centre on a daily basis. Emergency care is accessed through the Accident and Emergency Department of the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital on the basis of the severity of the case and Mr. Speaker, I will like to take this opportunity to inform the nation and this Honourable House of our intentions to extend the working hours of the Kingstown Health Centre and the Stubbs Polyclinic. While we are still presently working out the details, it is

expected that burrows of both health centres would be open up to 6:00 p.m. daily. This is primarily to meet the needs of the working population and to ease the burden on the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital.

Now Mr. Speaker, in the question the Honourable Member mix up the health centre and the Accident and Emergency area at the hospital and these are two different areas. So Mr. Speaker, this is the situation. I am much obliged.

HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: Mr. Speaker, with your permission please, Mr. Speaker. I believe this is the grand entrants of the Honourable Clayton Burgin to the Ministry of Health. I freeze up, Mr. Speaker, I freeze. I mean...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Would you please..., why do..., I mean, who do you have to..., are you commending him or are you asking...

HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: What do you think, Mr. Speaker, should I commend him, Mr. Speaker?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I do not know, I...

HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: As an East St. Georgian, Mr. Speaker, what do you suggest?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Proceed with your supplementary if you have one.

HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: I really saw you drop your head in shame, but I do not want to...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: That is not correct. Do not give these sort of motives to something that I did not do.

HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: That you did not do.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I never did that. Question number 12 then, the Honourable Member for West Kingstown.

HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: Thank you for helping me, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: West Kingstown, yes.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Mr. Speaker, I crave your indulgence to ask the Honourable Minister of Works on a very serious point, sometime last week I was taking some friends home in the Lowmans

area when it was raining and I got a serious injury to my back because a hole in the road and I am very serious about this eh, it is below the cemetery in Lowmans just past where the food vendor is, it is an awful hole and because it was raining and the hole was filled with water it was not visible, it is really on the highway, it is an atrocity. I leave there Mr. Speaker. Question number 12 Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question No. 12, yes thank you.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: To the Honourable Minister of Transport and Works.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Minister, just a minute, the Honourable Minister would respond to you probably privately I believe.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Yes I...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: He cannot do it now.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Yes I am quite in good faith Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thanks.

12. *The Honourable Daniel Cummings (West Kingstown), to ask the Honourable Minister of Transport and Works:*

The people of Ottley Hall are in dire need of basic amenities such as road and street lights. Would the Honourable Minister please state what plans are in place to establish proper access roads in the following areas where some street lights have just been placed;

- a. *the tract leading from the concrete road to the Buddy Gutter area; and*
- b. *the existing tracts leading from the end of that same concrete road to the settlements that spans out from there. This includes two branch tracts from the main tract, one starts at the house now occupied by Ruth St. John and the other ends near to the residence of Elizabeth Martin.*

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, I believe that question period have now come for oral questions for oral answers. I thought we had written questions for oral answers and they are submitted in advance. A whole commentary was made before the question is asked.

I want to observe first of all the difference between question number 12 and question number 10. Question number 12 tells you the knowledge; intimate knowledge of the Parliamentary Representative for West Kingstown verses that of Central Kingstown. Question number 11 was quite vague, general words, but the Parliamentary Representative for West Kingstown is intimately involved in the operation of his constituency

and therefore can call out names of persons where the road starts and names of persons where the road ends. I mean, I appreciate that. I can deal with that differently than I deal with generalised questions with very little intimate knowledge of the specific roads.

On the question of the pot holes by where the fella sells the itals, I believe if you drive down there by this evening it would have been dug out and grouted like Campden Park flat like the part up by shop rock, we would have dug out those holes, we are cutting and grouting right now and waiting on hot mix, because we have to prepare a lot of it in advance before you go and buy hot mix. So the roads we are doing some repairs on that so that is the oral question [Interjection] I say oral answer to the oral question and the written question, Mr. Speaker.

I have visited with the Parliamentary Representative in Buddy Gutter and I spoke to the residents of Buddy Gutter with the Parliamentary Representative. He is making representation for the road down there to be done. Some funds were allocated to that I believe two, three years ago under the Ministry of Housing then and some works were done on the road but not quite sufficient and I give a commitment to the people of Buddy Gutter that I will try to have some work done. I have not been able to put my hand on those resources yet, but I have not given up on that commitment and the two names called by the Honourable Parliamentary Representative Ruth St. John and Elizabeth Martin, I am familiar with both those names and I wondered whether they were specially selected to get a favourable response from me as Minister [laughter]. So I want to say to the two comrades there, we have not given up on your tracks over there at Buddy Gutter, comrade Ruth St. John and comrade Elizabeth and we will work alongside your Parliamentary Representative. I really want to do some work, Mr. Speaker, in the Buddy Gutter area, they had been deprived I would admit for some time and I will make sure that we put some resources into some of these, maybe not all in this quarter when we get the allocation. Okay, thank you.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question No. 13 Honourable Member for West Kingstown.

13. *The Honourable Daniel Cummings (West Kingstown), to ask the Honourable Minister of Social Development, Youth and Sports:*

The partially completed playing field at Ottley Hall is one of the few avenues for young people in the area to enjoy sports and games. The field is in need of finishing works and of regular maintenance.

Would the Honourable Minister please state if there are any plans for this work and when it is expected to be done.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Minister of Social Development, Youth and Sports and Culture.

HONOURABLE CECIL MC KIE: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, the National Lotteries Authority effected upgrades to the Ottley Hall Sports Facility in 2010 to complement the tremendous work initiated

through the auspices of the then Parliamentary Representative for West Kingstown, Honourable Rene Baptiste, whose dream it was to fashion a sports facility to deal with the rugged and rocky landscape of Ottley Hall, to work with private stakeholders and statutory corporations including the Social Investment Fund to implement the project.

The surface was levelled and very high retaining dry wall was established at the end next to the public road then the grassing phase was implemented. Unfortunately, two massive tropical storms including Tomas severely reversed what was previously accomplished. The facility has recently suffered other reverses of a human kind in the ugly form of vandalism which situation the National Sports Council is seeking to address, firstly by revival of the management committee from the Ottley Hall area whose responsibility it is to put programmes in place for regular maintenance. Hopefully that management committee will work along with the National Sports County and may have to put a caretaker in place to help address the security and vandalism concerns as well as the concerns of maintenance.

The scope of works implemented by the National Lotteries included spending of significant monies and included the construction of a fully functioning... and players pavilion and spectators changing room, of course that includes changing rooms and wash rooms, concreting a sizeable parking area next to the pavilion, application of top soil and fertilizers to the outfield and drainage. Attention is being given to repairing the vandalized areas and replacing the vandalized and stolen items such as face basins, toilet bowls and the wash room door. The council is also in the process of seeking funds to address the issue of the finishing works as identified in the question.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I should also indicate that it is the intention of the Ministry of Sports and the National Sports Council to visit all facilities, playing fields and hard courts over the next couple of months to make an assessment of where we are with these facilities and see where upgrades are required. It is also the intention to identify these facilities that would be allocated for local, regional and international use. I am much obliged.

SUPPLEMENTARY

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: On the question of the maintenance I did not hear any emphasis on that. You know we often spend money to build systems and so on, I do not know whether this management committee would be mandated to find mechanisms to ensure that the fields are maintained because that is the essence of the issue.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, it would be a combination of course of the management committee that would be put in place and critically the visits to these facilities that would allow us to better understand and appreciate what is required under these facilities.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question No. 14, Honourable Member for West Kingstown.

14. *The Honourable Daniel Cummings (West Kingstown), to ask the Honourable Minister of Housing:*

The area of Rose Place has seen the demolition of a few derelict buildings near to the public bath.

Would the Minister give serious consideration to the purchase of these lots for the purpose of relocating the persons who are living dangerously on the beach in that area.

HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL: Mr. Speaker, West Kingstown in particular Rose Place to me it is an interesting area within the boundaries of the city for which much consideration can be given and I want to thank the Honourable Member for bringing this to my attention.

Mr Speaker, I am currently holding dialogue with the Permanent Secretary and other senior officials within the Ministry that is the new Ministry I have been recently assigned and I am having a number of discussions on a range of issues for which the Ministry has responsibility. The issue of which the Honourable Member speaks, Mr. Speaker, forms part of the Ministry's Physical Planning and Informal Human Settlements Programmes.

Mr. Speaker, immediately upon my assumption of duties in the Ministry of Housing, my firm commitment to the Informal Human Settlement Sector was carried regularly in the electronic media and so Mr. Speaker, I am persuaded that to date most citizens at home and abroad would have heard my pronouncement. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, it is my intention to have this Ministry, the Ministry of Housing to continue to take the required actions to regularise more Informal Human settlements throughout all of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, the issue to which the Honourable Member refers surrounds the question of the safety of Informal Human Settlers and also the safety of citizens in general and it is one which this ULP administration considered to be of enormous importance. Equally, Mr. Speaker, the regularisation of any Informal Human Settlement, Mr. Speaker, also takes into consideration the relocation of the citizens concerned and this is done following the required investigation and with accompanying recommendations. Therefore, there is no doubt in my mind, Mr. Speaker, that the Honourable Member is fully aware of the extent to which this ULP administration has addressed this issue to which he refers. But I urge him, Mr. Speaker, to understand and to appreciate that there are certain steps which must be taken in this regard. Certain procedures which must be followed and certain resources which must be first acquired. As I stand here today, Mr. Speaker, I feel compelled to remind the Honourable Member that this ULP administration is an administration that loves the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and so more effort is ever spared to address the needs of its citizens.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, to which serious consideration must be paid as consideration is given to the expansion of the city of Kingstown particularly as it relates to the commercial sector and surely, Mr. Speaker, this issue as it relates to the residents of Rose Place or some residents in Rose Place, this must be placed on the front burner of our deliberations. I am so obliged, Mr. Speaker.

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

15. *The Honourable Roland Matthews (North Leeward), to ask the Honourable Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries:*

- a. *Will the Honourable Minister please state if there has been an improvement in both quality and quantity of banana fruits being shipped to the UK so far in 2012;*
- b. *if in the affirmative please give an update of this improvement; and*
- c. *if there has been a decrease please give reasons for.*

HONOURABLE SABOTO CAESAR: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I must say that I thank the Honourable Member for asking this question because it is an issue of national importance and the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines we are working in the best possible way that we can to ensure that the issue and the issues which will arise owing to the presence of the disease Black Sigatoka and Moko in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the devastating impact that it has had on the banana industry that we all seek to work with non-governmental organisations and farmers to address this problem.

Before I go into answering the question, Mr. Speaker, by way of introduction I just want farmers to rest assured that we are doing the best that we can with the resources that we have and that the light is at the end of the tunnel. We are seeing the light.

Mr. Speaker, the quantity of the fruit, the quantity of fruit exported both regionally, regionally to Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago primarily and extra regionally to the United Kingdom has been low during the last quarter of 2011, so the quantity has been low during the last quarter of 2011 and this has continued, Mr. Speaker, into the first seven weeks of 2012. The low quality is as a consequence of the Moko and Black Sigatoka diseases and of course the traditional mechanical damage to the fruits during harvesting and transportation which I am certain that the Honourable Member would agree as being something that we have been struggling with and seeking to grapple with for a very long time. So I just want to stress that there is a dichotomy showing that the poor quality of the fruit is not solely because of Moko and Black Sigatoka but we also have continuation of the traditional problems in terms of mechanical damage in transportation in harvesting.

There has been no improvement in food quality so far in 2012. With respect to the quantity of bananas exported there has been a steady decline. Records for the first seven weeks of 2012, these records show in week one we exported 1,393 boxes; in week two 527; in week three 1,035; in week four 581; in week five 960; in week six 225 and in week seven 379 a total of 5,100. The reduction in the volumes, Mr. Speaker, was foreseen since over 435 acres or 303,800 of mature and bearing bananas affected by the disease were cut back last October and November. It is a natural consequence because there was the presence of the disease we had to do a massive cut back and we would have had to destroy 434 acres of bananas. So it is a natural consequence that we will have a fall off in the quantities for export.

But Mr. Speaker, in order to address this question holistically, I must also note that the general fall off in terms of quantities is not something that just happened since we had the presence of the disease, because I do not want persons who are attempting to be malicious would want to say that it is basically, it is Black Sigatoka and Moko that brought bananas to the situation where it is today. Yes it is having a significant and devastating impact, but Mr. Speaker, the establishment of the European Union Single Market on the 1st January 1993 had a very significant impact to the ruling of the WTO dispute panel on the European Union Banana Regime which completely owed the preferential market access to Europe for ACP bananas also had a negative impact. The implementation of the EUREPGAP now global gap certification standards and fair trade practices since 2000 and 2001 respectively, the global gap certification standards is to have resulted in the largest number of farmers falling out of the industry estimated to about 1,200. So there has been a significant number of factors that would impact on the banana industry, therefore, the result that we are seeing is basically a culmination of those factors.

Mr. Speaker, fourthly the natural disasters, the drought and hurricane Tomas in 2010, the freak storm in 2011 and fifthly the Moko disease in 2007 and Black Sigatoka in 2009 which intensified in 2011. Mr. Speaker, currently the Ministry of Agriculture, we are embarking on a massive cut back programme, we have identified that there are approximately still three hundred and fifty acres of abandoned fields which is definitely a significant source of inoculums and we are ensuring that in fact they have already started on Monday the cut back of these fields. On Thursday, Mr. Speaker, I myself I am going in the fields and solidarity with the workers of the Ministry of Agriculture and I want to work in solidarity with all the farmers, because it is very important that we adopt the proper farming practices, because, Mr. Speaker, if I may note this, this disease is one that is not localised to St. Vincent and the Grenadines. And if I may just look back a bit on when the disease intensified in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, when you listen the news, when you follow the newspapers, many persons looked at it, looked at the opportunity as a political opportunity instead of looking at the issue in a more scientific way, persons were calling for resignations here, resignations there and the general cut and thrust of politics really I think, Mr. Speaker, got the better of many persons. But, Mr. Speaker, currently the Banana Industry in St Lucia is under significant threat, in fact, my research would have showed me that the disease would have devastated cultivations in Australia and there is no Unity Labour Party in Australia. The Honourable Dr. Ralph Gonsalves is not the Prime Minister of St Lucia but I am just putting it in context. And I would explain to you why I am contextualizing it this way because it is very important and very significant that every single banana farmer understand and appreciate the importance and the destruction of bananas which are sources of the inoculum.

There are persons who have a few plants in their backyard, Mr. Speaker, they would have noticed that the plant is a source of inoculum but they just leave the plant there, what happens next is that the Government would be spending large amounts of money to conduct the spraying but if you do not do your individual parts then it would definitely be an exercise in futility. Every single farmer would have to ensure that he assist the Government and work hand in hand in the cutting back process. I have held consultations and meetings so far, Mr. Speaker, with WINFRESH, WINFARM, the National Fairtrade Organisation and very soon I will be meeting with SVG Agro producers because this is something we definitely need a national effort if we are to control the spread of the disease.

Also, I would have contacted the Chairman of WINFRESH and I am also seeking a very scientific approach and I know the Honourable Member of North Leeward will be very appreciative of this to address and putting the politics out of it and looking at the science of the disease and since then I have written to the University of the West Indies for expert assistance as to how we can control the disease. I have written, Mr. Speaker, to Professor Clement Sankat the Principal of the University of the West Indies St Augustine Campus also to Dr. Arlington Chesney the Executive Director of the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) to Dr. ... also to the FAO, I have also written ... I have a drafted letter that I would send through the proper channels because, Mr. Speaker, I think that the devastating impact that black sigatoka is having on the agricultural sector of the sub-region is sufficient enough for the Ministers of Agriculture in the sub-region to address this issue at the sub-regional level.

Mr. Speaker, there is significant work that will continue during the next six weeks. As we speak, Mr. Speaker, the workers from the Ministry are out in the fields conducting the massive cut back process, they started on Monday in Mesopotamia and they are going to move into Lauders, Greiggs, Chapmans, Diamonds and Mt. Grenan and they are going to move up the East Coast.

Mr. Speaker, there will also be a process of education on the control of the disease because as we approach the control of this disease in a very scientific way the education of farmers as it pertains to the control of the disease is definitely significant. Mr. Speaker, I am obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question No. 16.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: [Inaudible] Mr. Speaker, I must say that I am very satisfied with the very fulsome answer from the Minister, I like his vigor and I could only wish you all the best in your new Ministry.

16. The Honourable Roland Mathews (North Leeward) asked the Honourable Minister of Lands:-

Will the Honourable Minister please state when will the regularization of lands for persons living on crown lands in North Leeward begin?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Minister of Lands.

HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL: Mr. Speaker, in 2001 when this administration assumed office, poverty reduction was named as one of the principal goals we achieve. It had been noted then that there was a huge number of citizens occupying state lands legally that is they had no title for the lands which they occupied. Mr. Speaker, in some cases some of these persons had tremendously large buildings on lots for which they had occupied. But Mr. Speaker, the ULP administration immediately suspended all transactions in land sales with civil servants at the Lands and Survey Department subsequently providing the relevant land information. A programme to facilitate the forward march was then crafted.

Mr. Speaker, quite unlike the previous administration which encouraged informal human settling commonly referred to as squatting; this ULP administration recognised that when persons live on lands for which they have no title there is no value to neither the state or to that individual. Mr. Speaker, the research suggests that this untenable situation is one of the main contributors to poverty. Mr. Speaker, this ULP administration therefore

immediately declared as public policy a regularization of illegal occupants, occupation of state lands as a means of removing citizens from the state of poverty which was prevalent when we took the reins of government.

Mr. Speaker, this process was dubbed turning dead capital into live capital. Mr. Speaker, in some cases persons have been in occupation of these lands for close to one hundred years. Mr. Speaker, appropriate staff at the Lands and Surveys Department then moved into these areas where this situation existed and these parcels of lands they were surveyed which were offered for purchase at concessionary prices. And Mr. Speaker in this process much consideration was given to the period of occupation and person's ability to pay in order to determine the selling price.

Mr. Speaker, resident of North Leeward have been the major beneficiary of this programme. It was in 2003, Mr. Speaker, staff at the Lands and Surveys Department sub-divided some 475,212 sq. ft of land into 156 lots at Fitz Hughes the equivalent of 10.9 acres of land. These lands, Mr. Speaker, were offered at only \$0.10 a square foot to the occupants. In addition, Mr. Speaker, residents of North Leeward benefited as follows. On June 2nd, 2004 and the 29th December, 2004 eight parcels of lands were allocated at Chateaubelair; on June 15th, 2005 eighty one lots were allocated at Charles Village; and thirty four parcels at Spring Village at \$0.50 for a square foot; 28 lots were also sold at Coulls Hill and another six at Golden Grove Chateaubelair.

In 2008 15 lots were sold at Rose Place, Rose Hall and in November 2010 another thirty eight lots was sold at Dark View, Rose Bank. Mr. Speaker, the aforementioned were all offered at concessionary prices. Mr. Speaker, during the last year and a half the relevant staff at the Lands and Survey Department continued extensive surveying of numerous parcels of land in North Leeward amounting to an additional 255 lots which are now being prepared for sale and this figure includes the following, Mr. Speaker, thirty six lots at Spring and Mangrove; 117 lots at Sharpes Village Chateaubelair; six lots at Cocoa in Chateaubelair; sixty four lots at Parks Chateaubelair and thirty two lots at Golden Grove Chateaubelair. All these celebrated land projects were given an enormous amount of coverage in the local press and so for me, Mr. Speaker, it is unusual that a question should be asked as to when the regularization of lands will begin.

Mr. Speaker, the work started in 2002 immediately upon the assumption of office by this ULP Administration and it will continue. But Mr. Speaker, it did not just end there, 2007 Mr. Speaker, this ULP administration introduced the Possessory Title Act which would have brought tremendous benefits to citizens of our blessed land including residents of North Leeward who occupied previously privately owned lands for numerous years without title. The passage of this Act, Mr. Speaker, now permits persons to make an application to the court and as long as they can prove that they have been in possession of the land for a specific period of time they can now obtain title. Mr. Speaker, this administration went one step further in 2009; persons who were previously offered crown lands but could not afford to pay within a specific period attracted interest rate at 8% and in many cases, Mr. Speaker, the interest accrued exceeded the principle cost of the land even in my own constituency, Mr. Speaker, this was the situation. And therefore, this ULP administration, Mr. Speaker, then reduced the interest rate to 3% and placed a five year cap on interest payment. Mr. Speaker, this has really removed that tremendous burden on the level of payment to those occupants and they are in a better position now to pay for these lands.

And so in closing, Mr. Speaker, it is evident and profound and it is indisputable what this ULP administration has done with respect to the regularization of lands for persons living on crown lands throughout the entire country since this ULP administration would have assumed office, in providing enormous assistance to all poor people in this blessed land of our St Vincent and the Grenadines. Thank you, Mr. Speaker

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question No. 17.

17. *The Honourable Vynnette Frederick (Opposition Senator) asked the Honourable Minister of Culture:-*

Given the fact that as far back as 2009 the NCF was described in the SVG Policy Framework and Development Strategy for Cultural and Creative Industry Development, in the following terms; the National Cultural Foundation/NCF remains for the most part inactive. Its mandate appears unclear and in fact conflicts with, especially, the CDC.

Will the Honourable Minister please explain what if any decisions have been taken to revamp reorganise and revitalise the NCF?

HONOURABLE CECIL MCKIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members. The Ministry of Culture presently engaged in organizing to have National Consultations on revising the National Cultural Policy. It should be noted that the Policy Framework and Development Strategy for Creative and Cultural Industry Development constitutes only a part of the bigger picture of a National Cultural Policy. This exercise will take several months but is expected to be concluded by August 2012.

The National Cultural Policy is an important and necessary instrument in the guiding of resource allocation and institutional usage therefore the consultation exercise will also examine the institutions presently being used, the resources that would be required for implementing the revised policy, rationalizations that may be needed in the use of resources and the desirability of creating and or modifying and or deleting institutions. The National Cultural Foundation will be assessed within the framework of the revised National Cultural Policy and then be re-mandated, resourced and equipped as would best enable to contribute to the National Development Programme. We expect that that final process would be completed sometime early in 2014.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to complement the work done by the previous Ministers of Culture, the Honourable Rene Baptiste at that time and the Honourable Frederick Stephenson on the important foundation that they have laid. Over the last ten years we would have seen culture and all of its facets increase by leaps and bounds and we would continue to ensure that this sector continues to play a very pivotal role in the development of the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines. Much obliged.

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICKS: Mr. Speaker, just a clarification, I am not sure whether the intended date of completion of the exercise is 2014 that is what the Minister seems to have just said, that he expects all of this to be finished by the start of 2014?

HONOURABLE CECIL MCKIE: The exercise for the review of a National Cultural Policy August 2012 and the National Cultural Foundation process in 2014.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I would like to appeal to Members of this Honourable House, I want to speak [inaudible] sorry, not [inaudible] I have noticed that we are asking these questions but we have these lengthy preamble. I know that sometimes you know, you have preambles to make your statements maybe clear or some case maybe or your questions clear, but I think it is totally unnecessary to be having all these lengthy preambles. And I think that we need to do something better than this and then it is followed by lengthy questions and it is taking, I nearly said “hell” sorry and it is taking rather long.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: [Inaudible] lengthy answer

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Well, a lengthy question requires a lengthy answer doesn't it? Well, then let us cut on the questions and therefore I will deal with the answer. Let us cut the length of the questions and then we will deal with the length of the answer; we move on.

18. *The Honourable Vynnette Frederick (Opposition Senator) to ask the Honourable Minister of Technology:-*

Vincyclassroom.com an online resource to benefit teachers, students and parents has been live online since January 2012, registering more than fifteen thousand hits and counting since its go live date, and mobilizing more than 300 local and regional content contributors to the site via its Facebook support group page. Since that time many complaints have been made that the Vincyclassroom website along with some others including YouTube is not accessible on a number of the laptop computers provided for students by the government. Will the Honourable Minister please indicate the following:-

- a. How many machines have been provided by the government to the population;*
- b. how many of these machines have been reported as not working to the government;*
- c. what if anything is being done to improve the citesvg website; and*
- d. will the government take the opportunity now to endorse the initiative taken by Vincyclassroom.com which has received regional support and mobilized the support of Vincentians across political lines and throughout the Diaspora?*

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

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, in relation to (a) the 14,978 Netbook, Machines, Laptops whatever names you wish to call them are being distributed in the first phase of the distribution: call it roughly 15,000 to students and of course we give teachers also in the classes. About a dozen or so have been reported as not working, I have suspicion that it may be more than a dozen but I do not think that the question asked how many have been reported as not working to the government. If they are not working they should be reported to the teachers not to the government; because I met a couple of people whose children said to me that they have ... their laptops not working and I said, “You reported it to the teacher” “No!” Because they are using somebody else's own, they haven't reported it.

As you would expect if we have this large number we would have a percentage of them but we try to replace those which come because we had some in the storeroom some which for one reason or the other was damaged.

Now, I hope that with the next question that to make it intelligible, Mr. Speaker, to those who are listening that the Honourable Senator would explain the meaning of the words, sorry, the meaning of the abbreviation so that other Members in Parliament and the people who are listening would understand. Like for instance when you use “CITESVG” C.I.T.E; you know, it is Committee for the Integration of Technology in Education so that people will know... so the question will be made intelligible.

Mr. Speaker, in 2011 we established the government that is a committee for the integration of technology and education site. And it was set up as a steering committee to support the Ministry of Education in its effort to integrate ICT into the Caribbean curriculum and that is the first stage because as I pointed out during the time here in the House when I was winding up; I am quoting an article from Dr. Jules and another colleague: the technology itself important as it is you don't get the full benefit unless it is integrated in the teaching and the learning process and not only must it be integrated in the teaching and learning process you must transform it, the teaching and learning process that the technology must help to transform it. It is like you heat water to 100 degrees centigrade it becomes another commodity; steam, you have the water, you have the heat; they are integrated they are linked for the process of heating the water but that water becomes transformed into something else. So, we have to integrate and the process of the integration you go a step further even to transform. Of course it is a process, but it is important that we have it clear conceptually. And Mr. Speaker, if I may just say parenthetically what I try to do in this scale of ICT there are a lot of people who try to throw smoke in other people's eyes. The technical things are fairly straight forward once they are explained to individuals you know, it is not abstract nuclear physics. The highly technical things of repairing and so forth, you have highly technical persons but in this particular matter you have to understand so that you could address policy issues which are important in this context.

Now, this committee comprises Education Officers, Teachers, other Educators, School Administrators, the classroom teachers and we have assistance from outside. For instance when it was set up first, an educational technologist called Seubert Well helped us, she came in under the auspices of the ninth EDF: Improvement of Education through the use of ICT, which programme is still on and we are doing a lot of work in that regard. One of the activities of this committee was to set up a webpage to share particular reviews of software website devices and the like but that was only one dimension the actual website itself is a work in progress and it is intended eventually to be a resource linked to SVG E-net to provide the portal for local teachers, students and parents to form a community of learners to support education in the state.

SVG E.net is itself a portal which the Ministry of Education is currently developing as a management tool and as a teaching learning... and as a teaching learning resource. The Ministry has a structured approach to the development of online educational resources which meets the diverse needs of teachers and students. We recognize the need for the provision of quality content to our learners, quality content standards, we have to train and develop professionally the Education Officers, School Administrators and Teachers for the production and posting of online resources and that training is ongoing. The Ministry of Education is subjecting such resources to rigorous expert examination, peer review, prior to making them available to teachers and students. To facilitate this process subject panels whose tasks include production of online resources have been set up at

the secondary school level. The Primary level subject panels are in the process of being established and by the end of this term they would be completed established.

The work of the committee for the integration of technology in education site is very essential for us to meet our ICT objectives and we will do updates in the future and the site will be linked to SVG E.net. This latter initiative is expected to be completed by March 2012 and it is one of the Central initiatives of the ninth EDF project. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, we are also linking with Notes Masters which is a CXC initiative and what I spoke to the [inaudible] Dr. Jules who heads the CXC because the territories in the Caribbean had gone about having the Computer Centers and even Laptop in the secondary school they had placed their emphasis on developing Notes Masters for the CXC for the secondary programming. But when he came to see me a few months ago I said look: "We got to do Notes Masters also for the Primary School because we had made the initiative in our country in going to the Primary School that was a conscious decision". And he said yes and they are working on that but we have the subject panel.

I really do not want to pour cold water on any initiative which anybody wants to do like for instance Vincyclassroom but we must understand it that you know, I have been advised that Wordpress is a popular host website that allow persons to blog, post links, upload videos and directly link to various pages content on the internet. And that Vincyclassroom is hosted on word press. Now, it is important that this thing is done in a structured manner and what Vincyclassroom wants to do is its own business but we have to make sure it does not degenerate into simply a blog and the amount of work which is required to be done for the content it is critical that the subject panel be put in place and peer reviews they are subjected to.

Take for instance, yesterday I had a cabinet committee on the economy and when the Ministry of Education came up for discussion I asked the people who were there from the Ministry of Education, I said, "Explain to me precisely not just conceptually, I understand the concept; how are we going to work in Notes Masters, let us take a history course. Are we going to have on that particular portal, simply a history in content centralised from CXC"? Say out of Barbados it is one syllabus what is intended here is that the Barbadian Ministry of Education and the person responsible there would put their content on in accordance with the syllabus, so too here in St Vincent. The students here will be able to access the content from Barbados; the Barbadian ones would be able to access here but they should be of the similar standard because they are dealing with the same syllabus and that they are subject to peer review: the subject panels when everything is put together. And that is why we are talking about integrating the learning and the teaching and have the content up to a particular standard. And that would be done for every form and that is the process. The same thing is in relation to primary education.

CSEC, Mr. Speaker, has a pilot in Grenada and somewhere else, two places I think maybe three, for an exit exam instead of the Common Entrance, so you would have a common exit examination across the region and we are not in the pilot but we want to be in the programme fully in 2014. We can get it done for 2013 but it is not going to be done so we do our Common Entrance in the same way but from 2014 I am hoping that we can get our exit but in the meantime the subject panels are being put together for the primary school for the common ... and work would be there for the students in relation to the subjects for the Common Entrance. I want to say this I have gone through the Primary School and to the Secondary Schools and I have seen the students and let

me ... and let me deal here with the Primary Schools, with their Laptops and I have seen for instance in Byera, I have gone there and I have seen the teacher, Mr. Connor teaching mathematics using the technology but it has to be admitted that the work is uneven between schools depending on the extent with which the teachers are engaged sufficiently in the process.

I think I have answered the part about Vincy classroom in an omnibus kind of a way with the others. As I said, I have no problem about Vincy classroom, I do not know about [interjection] No! No! No! I did not say that; I said I had no problem with Vincy classroom as indeed with anybody. All I am saying is this: we have to be careful because I will tell you this, let me tell you this: you know, Mr. Speaker, I try to read up a lot on the policy dimension and nature, character of the technology. And I use the very technology itself to read and study. I am not a blog person because I really ... they have a lot of foolishness sometimes and so on and so forth. You see, I have lived more years than I have remaining to live, so those I have remaining to live I am putting them to good use.

I read ... there is an article which I have just read from a magazine which I get it is a writing magazine but it has some good pieces in it. I read all types magazine this one here is of February 11th, 2012 the SPECTATOR and there is an article written by an associate editor of the SPECTATOR, Toby Young and the name of this article is "DAFT TIMES" and the substance of this article is that a lot of people could be doing a lot of things with technology which are simply daft and they could be doing things to take shortcuts to education, not to integrate teaching and learning. He begins first of all by talking about somebody who is retelling the novels of Dickens in a sophisticated graphic novel format, they are rewriting for instance Great Expectations or they are rewriting Oliver Twist and they will put it up. You can buy it in the hard copy but they also have it up. Now, you get a story, you get a flavor but it is not literature. There is the assumption that young people do not have time to read and study and that learning short periods of concentration is like instant coffee. It is like people I meet they tell me they do Western Philosophy, they tell me, Mr. Speaker, they do Western Philosophy in one semester three months, four months. Now, I did a two year programme on the history of political thought from Sedes right down to Mao Tse-Tung. And when I am reading no one is giving me an abbreviated and graphic version of Plato, I read Plato's Republic, I read Aristotle's Politics. When I come to St Augustine I read the Cities of God, the originals. I would read commentaries; I come to St Thomas Aquinas Philosophy, I read Summa Theologica so you get the foundation in things.

I do not read ... there are people who do philosophy, these modules, they do not read the originals, they read summaries of the commentaries on the original so they do not get it even first hand, and they get it third hand and fourth hand. Now, really! Really! Really! I mean, so we have to be careful. He writes about a Mr. Reynolds who has been leading essentially Joseph Reynolds, he is a tireless campaigner against the dumbing down of the GCSE English Curriculum. This is the programme in England, the equivalent of the CXC.

"Mr. Reynolds first came to national attention

And I am quoting the article.

two years ago when he complained that his daughter's school had ditched Shakespeare in favour of the Simpsons; he lost that battle but he struggles on valiantly, a one man crusade against falling standards. He tells me that the latest horror is the Edexcel GCSE English Syllabus as a unit called English Today Theme two.

Edexcel it is on the computer but you can get it also in the hard copy, what did they do?

pupils are expected to study the ITV1 homepage of *Britain's Got Talent*, an advert for a reality show called *Got to Dance* and a 2009 cover of *Heat* magazine. When Mr. Reynolds's wife complained "Edexcel won't respond to his letters any more" she was told that *Heat* conformed to the National Curriculum requirement that texts studied in English should be "of high quality, among the best of their type". It must be assumed that any magazine front cover is of "high quality" in terms of media,' wrote Alan Pearce, an Edexcel employee. Consequently, the study of any magazine cover can be considered to satisfy National Curriculum requirements".

So, you can have all sorts of things you know, this is why the Ministry of Education is doing things in a focused matter and you have to integrate teaching and learning and lead it to a transformational process. This is not something which admits of harum-scarum. It is not something which admits of just an instant flurry it is about learning and teaching and proper reflection. Any site that children can go on and learn is fine but the point is this what about the structured programme for the students to learn and for them to be properly taught with the technology integrated in that process and that is what we are seeking to do.

HONOURABLE VYNETTE FREDERICKS: Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question No. 19.

19. *The Honourable Vynette Frederick (Opposition Senator), asked the Honourable Minister of Technology:*

The USF LIME (Universal Service Fund) initiative to provide wireless online connectivity to schools and other locations around the state is indeed important. Given the popularly held view that LTE technology which is capable of facilitating island wide wireless connectivity will the Minister of Technology please indicate;

- a. Whether free universal wireless connectivity in St Vincent and the Grenadines is a goal which is being pursued by the government;*
- b. if yes, how far along are the stakeholders in coming on board with the idea;*
- c. what was the fee paid to LIME for the installation of wireless that facilitates the schools and other sites around the country; and*
- d. what is the general technical set up per school to provide internet connectivity which was provided by LIME?*

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, if a question is asked about LTE so too is GSM, so too is EDGE, so too is Generation 2, Generation 2.5 what is LTE, you are asking me about LTE, explain to the House what LTE means?

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK: I was doing that, Mr. Speaker, not by saying what LTE stands for which is not an explanation. What exactly it stands for escapes me at the moment.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: What it stands for?

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK: I don't have the document with me at the moment to tell you specifically what LTE stands for would the Minister assist?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: You explain.

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK: No Minister, you are the Minister I defer to you.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, LTE has a precise meaning just like C.I.T.E.

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK: I defer to you Minister for the specific meaning.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: [Striking of the gavel] Honourable Member if the question is not intelligible then...

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK: But it is intelligible to the Minister to whom it is directed and I deferred to him for the meaning of LTE.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: No, you are asking me the question.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: We have a difficulty with the question as Minister of [Inaudible] has a meaning.

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK: So, the question is being determined to be unintelligible to the Minister?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: What I am saying the Minister

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, do you know what LTE means? You have to speak in the English language.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I do not know what it means.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: If the Honourable Member is asking a question and she does not know what it means

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: But she herself has difficulty in saying what it means.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: What LTE means.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: And therefore I am saying that ...

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, I will help her; it means Long Term Evolution Technology.

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK: Very well, I am much obliged to you.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: There is no rigmarole in this you know.

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK: I am much obliged to you, Mr. Minister and I look forward to your answer, grateful for the clarification.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: It is important because if you are going to ask something [inaudible] [interjection] yes. [Interjection]

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Childish.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: [Striking the gavel] Honourable Member, I take strong objections to your comment, it is not childish. I am saying it is not childish; I am taking strong objection to it. If questions ... [please sit] questions are asked in this House must not just only to be the understanding of the person to whom the question is answered. It is for the education and information of every Member of this House. And the fact that we are going out to the public, for the public too; so, I am saying if one is called to give an explanation to something that even though one understands it and you feel that the general public, including Members of the House do not understand it and you ask to give the explanation what is childish about that? Continue your question.

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK: And Mr. Speaker, I appreciate what is being said in regard to clarify. I must indicate though, Mr. Speaker, that sometimes in clarifying technology you end up sort of over explaining which would actually lengthen question time indeed.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, I am a simple country lawyer who has come to the Ministry of Technology and therefore I have to try and learn policy issue and able to handle brief. Those who are out there might be able to correct me, I had to study what [inaudible] at the moment Mr.

Speaker, there isn't LTE, The Long Term Evolution Technology available generally in St Vincent and the Grenadines. What we have the LTE Technology is really what is called the fourth generation technology, what we have here in St Vincent is second or 2.5 generation mobile network, I mean technology on the mobile network. And we have them in (GSM) which is a Global System for Mobile communication or the General Packet Radio Services (GPRS).

Customers on a Four-G Network expect to get over one hundred times speed of what is currently available, between the second and the 2.5 network. That is why I asked the question because that is what is being asked:-

“If LTE technology is capable of facilitating island wide wireless connectivity please indicate whether free universal wireless connectivity in St Vincent is a goal which is being pursued free”.

And that the question is prefaced by saying by using the LTE technology which is capable of facilitating island wide access and you can get it at the speed it would be one hundred, more than one hundred times what you currently have. Mr. Speaker, to understand how this functions, you see other people read a lot of stuff and I always like to look at things basic because as I say, I am a simple country lawyer at least that is how I am supposed to be dubbed, never mind whatever else that I have studied.

Mr. Speaker, the speed which you can get say on a continental landmass is easier and cheaper to get it than if you have to deal it with island. From the tower to the unit whether it is a mobile phone or a device like the computer the Laptop, you can get it but you have to and you can get ... but the problem is what about the back fall? How are you going to get it from the tower to the switch, the main switch and from the main switch to the provision by the cable because you are dealing with underwater cable to communicate with the international ... Now, Mr. Speaker, at the moment the companies get 85% of their revenue from the voice, from the calls which are being made, you may get 15% from data. So, what is being asked is to provide the internet facility free but when you get the Four-G, when you get the LTE you are going to have a bulk of the provision made by the voice over internet protocol and you are going to have what you will be paying for is really the internet not quite the same thing as you are paying for the voice because of the difference in the technology as it evolves.

So, to deliver it free you would have to make right at the moment the voice far more expensive putting on a tax so that you can subsidise or we set up our own network or something like that. It is a difficult proposition at the present time. So, what do you do you are going to have the expense of the technology into LTEH coming, at the moment you have about 40% of the homes having the internet but the access is there since 2005 and we are making access available to people because of the 107 schools we have gone to and all the Community Centers and Learning Resource Centers. And the 15,000 Laptops which we shared out increased the numbers of Laptops which are available because when you give the access people have to have the machines.

So, we go at different ends of it, we give the people the access, we do not give it free but because of the numbers which have been involved the expansion where you used to have an entry cost of \$90.00 you now have an entry cost for the internet at \$35.00. And we passed a law here to take off the VAT on the entry cost and then we go further through the Universal Service Fund we are providing a certain number of persons with free access. The matter becomes further complicated, Mr. Speaker, because I am answering all the questions in am

omnibus way. At the moment the computers which we have here link up easily with the Wi-Fi, when this LTE comes in as I read and understand this, the computers which come in when it is generalized after that the Laptops you will have the LTE facility to connect it and these would just have the usual Wi-Fi arrangements which we have. We might have to put a device on them increasing the cost. So, matter is an involved business of technology, of supply of computers, of cost and it is not sustainable now to talk about doing it free. What we tried to do is provide as we are providing now for the access to everybody and then to provide laptops and give the VAT off and just like when you had water available to everybody but some people did not have connection, we paid for them to get the connection we will do the same thing now.

And I just want to make this point. The question does not even give credit to the Government that is why I asked you to say what USF is Universal Service Fund is a fund where we get 1% under the statute and it goes in there and we decide how we are using it; through the NTRC which is the agency of the state. I think I have said enough in the layman's term and I know people out there would say it in a more complicated way but I think I have said it even for somebody who is almost my age group like the Honourable member from Central Kingstown to understand it.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: How you know that?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I saw you listening intently; I saw you listening to me intently. Now, Mr. Speaker, other parts of the question, so the point is this, the long and short from which I gave it is not practicable right now to do it free, but clearly we have access built out and we are in the process of making more and more people have access to the internet. And those who do not have and cannot afford it we are providing access to them. Because even if they have the access they are going to have to need the computers too you know and the numbers of computers have increased tremendously since we distributed the 15,000 laptops and when we distribute the other 15,000 the numbers would even go higher. I just want to say this, Mr. Speaker, I want anybody in this House to tell me how many developing countries are as far as we are? Indeed, there are some developing countries that have not reached where we are in this business.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say this you see on these matters I am very even as I say so myself, I am humble and I am a learner but I know for instance, I have cross-examined doctors, top surgeons in this country about the spine from right at the top of the neck to the sacral and I know as much about every single vertebrae coming down there because I studied it, it is not advanced nuclear physics. Whatever it is if you have an interest you can go and read it. The Governor General has given me this portfolio of technology and I have to read up on it and study the brief and look at everything. I know it was said the last time sometime last year and I smiled, why I called the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown "Te yea! Yea! Yea! You are the named Minister Jerrol is the man who you know, was form of the belittling. That is why I want to find out what LTE means. [Interjection] I owe you, I do not forget you know, I does forgive plenty, I forgive you as a good Catholic boy [Interjection] well, let me take "good" away, let me leave "catholic boy" [laughs]

Mr. Speaker, the fee paid by LIME (c) for the installation of the wireless. LIME was contracted by NTRC after being successful in a public tender to carry out two respective projects. The initial one involved 28 locations comprising all twelve Learning Resource Centres; seven Community Centers and nine rural schools. This project commenced in 2010 and has a total cost of \$247,608.098; \$169,725.082 covered the Capital cost of the

equipment including computers at some locations and an annual recurrent cost of EC\$50,000. The project is for five years and LIME is responsible for maintaining all equipment including the computer supplied under the project., The annual cost for the internet service under this project was supplied free of cost by LIME.

And then there is a project, the schools project involving 107 educational facilities both private and public; primary, secondary, tertiary and special needs level. Project commenced in June 2011 a total cost of \$5.23 million, \$1.7 million of which cover the Capital cost and an annual recurrent cost of \$695,731.00. It is a five years project and LIME is responsible for maintaining all the equipment under recurrent cost. The monthly cost associated with the internet service is captured within the recurrent cost of the project. Mr. Speaker, I should point out that all those figures were made available by NTRC at a public briefing and they are in the public domain.

What is the general technical set up for schools? I will read what the [inaudible] provide internet connectivity; I will read the answer which is given to us.

“Each school is equipped with two internet connections for the purpose redundancy. These two internet pipes for schools feed both internal and external commercial grid Wi-Fi access points. There is a minimum of two internal and two external access points for school, the internet access pipes per each school in the range and speed from a minimum of 8 megabits up to a maximum of 20 at some schools. The speed chosen for each location is dependent on the number of students at the specific school. All Wi-Fi access points are always open so that both students as well as persons in the vicinity of the school can access the internet free of cost”.

That is another way, people can go to the Community Centre and access the internet but they can also go outside the school premises and access it. And incidentally this year we intend to provide as we have done for a the educational institution to do for the clinics and the police stations give you more points which they can have the access in the vicinity. This policy of having the access points open was not something that the service providers were inclined to do because they thought they were going to lose potential customers but it is the policy of the government and we insisted that this be done. Now, Mr. Speaker, I think that is the long and short of the story. [Interjection]

Well the point about it is this, since LTE: The Long Term Evolution Technology formed the basis of the question, the answer could not have been understood until I explained what LTE was about and is different to everything else as to why we do not consider it sustainable at the moment but we are providing the access which is available throughout the country now and we are making the practical connection for people in the ways in which I have described it, and I am very grateful for the Honourable Senator for asking the question but I just advised her on the next occasion, please understand what these things mean before you ask me about them. I am obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question No. 20 – Honourable Senator Baptiste.

The Honourable Anesia Baptiste (Opposition Senator) asked the Honourable Minister of Transport and Works:-

20. *Will the Honourable Minister please indicate whether the condition of the "Guinea Hill Road" in Upper Cane Hall used by students and adults to go to and from school and work respectively, will be addressed in the 2012 work program of BRAGSA with a view to providing some improvements for the constituents?*

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Minister Francis.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, I must comment this is a more straightforward and simple question than the one prior. I am pleased with the Senator's question. Forgive me if I [inaudible] my ankle [interjection] I know.

Guinea Hill Road, Mr. Speaker, I understand the concern of the Member the Honourable Senator, this is a road the Parliamentary Representative for West St George already brought to my attention and he is working actively with the technical people to see how best we can approach this. In fact, I believe in the near future we will have a machine grade that road somewhere but we have to understand that some of the lands around this road are privately owned and we just cannot go and put bulldozer on them and start to fix. It has not escaped us and it is one that I believe some action will be done within the 2012 work programme [inaudible].

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE: No! Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question No. 21 then.

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE: Mr. Speaker, I am minded to sort of paraphrase in light of your concern earlier about length.

The Honourable Anesia Baptiste (Opposition Senator) asked the Honourable Minister of Planning:-

21. *In light of October 4th, 2011 flood which affected residents on the other side of the river at Buccament on the Bay Resort, and also affected the Seventh Day Primary School;*

- a. whether the planning authorities have as yet received application from the Buccament Resort Managers to import material for the completion of the river defence on the residents side and*
- b. if yes; has this application been approved and when can the residents realistically expect the defence to be completed, so they may rest easier?*

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Minister of Informal Human Settlements and Planning.

HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIELS: Mr. Speaker, I have been advised that it is not the usual practice for anyone or any organisation to submit to the Physical Planning Unit within the Ministry of Housing Informal Human Settlements, Lands and Surveys and Physical Planning applications for the importation of materials for physical development purposes; therefore, Mr. Speaker, there is no need for the Physical Planning and Development Board to grant approval in this regard. Mr. Speaker, I honestly believe that this question was wrongly directed since the Physical Planning Unit does not deal with such requests. Much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question No. 22, the final question I believe.

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE: Mr. Speaker, before I ask question No. 22 I know I cannot bring issues in Press here in to the Parliament but I just want to say to the public listening, I would be addressing that issue further because the answer from the Minister is seriously conflicting with statements made in the Press by the very Buccament Resort.

22. *The Honourable Anesia Baptiste (Opposition Senator) asked the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of National Security;*

With the reports of crime and violence against women and children in the public in recent times, will the Honourable Minister of National Security please state:-

- a. how many of our women folk have been killed and wounded criminally during the period January 2011 – January 2012;*
- b. how many of these deaths and wounding incidents have been as a result of domestic disputes;*
- c. how many reports of rapes against women and children have been reported over the same period; and*
- d. how many charges and convictions have been made in all cases over the same period?*

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Minister of National Security.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, I know the time is getting late and we have some other work to do, I will try to give as abbreviated an answer as possible given the amount of data requested. I gave the Honourable Senator Baptiste the information on the two spreadsheets. What I did, because asking only for the period January 2011 to January 2012 would not be sufficiently illustrative of what progress we have made or not made, as the case may be, say for ten years before. So, I provided the period for January 1999 to January 2000, so we can get a proper comparison.

For example, in the latter period the year 2011 to 2012 January there were five murders in which women were victims, in that earlier period there were three, two of them were domestic disputes then, four now more or less within the same ballpark. Wounding where women were the victims allegedly three hundred and seven in the 2011 to 2012 period, 397 in the period 1999 to 2000 but those involved in the domestic dispute the number in the more recent period is relatively smaller 79 compared to 209 in the period 1999 to 2000.

The numbers for rape more or less in the same group, same area, a little less in 2011 to 2012: 56 compared to 59 in the period 1999 to 2000 in the same ballpark. We have seen when we look at incest and intercourse with girls under 15 and girls under 13 which is classified in the earlier period as carnal knowledge but has a specific differentiation in 2011, 2012 we see much larger numbers in the later period. For instance for incest in the earlier period was four and in this latter period is 81 but what is interesting is that the 81 cases of incest in the latter period one person is charged with 63 cases, now when you look at the cases for girls under the age of 15 there are 46 cases in the latter period but 38 is one person charged. What I think has been happening over the last 10 years, though, is that we are seeing more reports of domestic disputes and more reports of incidents of rape and incest.

The proportion arrested charged and convicted it is difficult to talk about in the particular year being charged because the Honourable Senator, these are mainly indictable offences those for instances rape and the ones with incest you do not see the conclusion of them in that particular year because they have to go to a preliminary enquiry and then they have to go to the criminal assizes. In fact many of the woundings also go to the criminal assizes though some of the woundings are dealt with summarily at the Magistrate Court.

We are not going to be able to provide all the data here, I have it but what I would do I would also give the Minister of Social Development these statistics which I believe his office would have maybe not in this summary. The important point is that we have to be reporting more and we have to make sure that our investigation is more up to speed. We are setting up a unit, it has not been set up yet, the top person has been chosen within CID, I have been advised it is a Superintendent, a woman an experienced woman who will be in charge of a unit with domestic abuse, violence against women and also trafficking in person. So, we will set up a special unit inside of. I made the announcement in the Budget but the instructions have been given to the Commissioner of Police by the Ministry of National Security and he is in the process of doing that. He told me has identified a number of persons including some people who are very skilled and some who are young and vibrant and also highly trained. So, we are making progress. Thank you.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay, that brings us to the end of question time, Honourable Prime Minister; is this an appropriate time for continuation?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: In as much as I had spoken to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition and to the Honourable Member of the Northern Grenadines, I spoke to the Honourable Leader before. The two Bills which we have are not going to take us any length of time; I do not think that there is anyone on this side who will be speaking on them because they are very straight forward. One of them we have dealt with already in the Budget the debates, the arguments took place but I just have to bring the Bill to give effect to those decisions; okay so that we keep it tight. And the other two we will do at select committee. We should be out hopefully in another half an hour or three quarters of an hour. Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: In demonstration of that we do not need to invoke 12:5?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I do not think so unless we reach up to 5:00 o'clock. Mr. Speaker, item one on the list ... Clerk I am taking over your job, I am sorry: in the interest of speed; I apologise to you, I do not wish to make you redundant Madam Clerk.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

- 1. Public Sector Investment Loan Bill 2011.**

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move that a Bill for an Act to authorize the Government to raise funds for the Public Sector Investment Programme be read a first time. The objective and reason for the Bill is contained in that long title. I so move.

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

Question put and agreed to

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

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

Question put and agreed to

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move that a Bill for an Act to authorize the Government to raise funds for the Public Sector Investment Programme be read a second time.

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

Question put and agreed to

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Debate.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, you would recall that one form of financing was to raise \$40 million by way of Bonds and that is what this Bill is about. You noted in Clause No. 3:-

“The funds authorized under this Act shall be raised upon the best and most favourable terms that can be obtained”.

Because we are going on the market we are making the offer, we are hoping to go to the market the end of March beginning of April and we are working with an institution to address these Government Bonds. We should get a reasonable rate, they will be ten years, and of course ten years monies are more expensive than short term monies under the Bill: Treasury Bills, but we should get a reasonable rate. And that is it, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Further debate.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Prime Minister states the Bill does not need a lot of debate, the Honourable Member of East Kingstown had asked to comment and approve this [inaudible] straightforward request before us. But perhaps, an important junction before we conclude this and in the spirit of much of what has gone forward today, remind ourselves that earlier today we spoke about the experience of the Falkland Islands, a people who are not yet sovereign being described a colony of others still in search of self determination. But you, Mr. Speaker, may recall that when they visited us the last time around

they proudly indicated that for a population of just over 3,000 on a land mass the size of Jamaica, dependent on the export of mutton. Is it sheep and fishing? They had no need to borrow any money whatsoever to run their affairs partly the result of two and three times their annual demands. Three thousand people is not the size of any ... it is just over the constituency of the South Grenadines I believe. And certainly not half the size of the average constituency here in St Vincent and the Grenadines an important statistic [inaudible] Mr. Speaker that is the way the cookie crumbles.

I think in St Vincent and the Grenadines perhaps only the Northern and the Southern Grenadines might be able to sustain themselves, none of the mainland constituencies of twice the size left on our own will be able to generate the means to carry ourselves.

Mr. Speaker, we clearly need these Capital public sector funds because we on our own are not able to do so. The debate that we completed earlier this year in the Budget debate; and I think then we would have noticed that our external loans required just over \$44 million and for local loans just about \$60 million and we have chosen the route to go by way of raising Bonds in other words we would have gone on the long term market which I believe is an execution of Clause No. 3 which says:-

“Funds authorised under this Act shall be raised under the best and most favourable terms that can be obtained”.

And that is the point the Prime Minister wants to say, it is long term and perhaps we will get low interest rate and we will be able to catch ourselves and repay it at a pace that is easier to us. No one has any difficulty with that Mr. Speaker, but we still have an obligation, Mr. Speaker, if only by way of reminding the Government in the difficult and challenging times it is not just simply the matter of the acquisition of the funds on the best terms available but perhaps more important is the application of these funds. You know we still have these running debates as to whether we are borrowing these monies to get ourselves out of an austerity situation and that seems to be a bad word these days, I do not want to prolong that debate on it or whether or not it is going to be used for stimulus effect we no longer can talk of countercyclical measures but ultimately it is our hope and aspiration the word that has been brought – invoked recently again, Mr. Speaker, that this Public Sector Investment we would see an end to the period of what clearly is undesirable jobless growth in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Because we already had a long day and we have gone through the lunch period, I would not go through an exercise that I earlier wanted to do, Mr. Speaker, which was to see how much of this fund was going to be applied and again I concede that that is a debate which we have had before. But we simply want to ask the Government even at this time to ensure that as far as it is possible and in these difficult and challenging times that as much as the Public Sector Investment as possible that are expended brings with it jobs and opportunities for people even while ensuring we maintain a reasonable safety net for our people and that ultimately the citizens of this country are better off for the creation of additional debt.

And I say that even while I recognize that our debt portfolio at this time is still within the prudential guidelines; something for which we should have some appreciation for. Having said that, Mr. Speaker, we on this side have no difficulty in giving our assent in support for this important piece of legislation. Much obliged.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown for the support given by the Opposition to this Bill to raise \$40 million by way of Bonds. And I am also grateful for his reminder that St Vincent and the Grenadines we have a Debt to GDP in the midst 60's 65 or there about, incidentally the lowest in the OECS of the independent countries of the OECS. Not talking about Montserrat which is a country of 4,000 persons and is sustained largely by Granting aid. In fact only Trinidad and Tobago in Caricom has a lower Debt to GDP ratio than we have and they have oil. Britain which is the colonizing power of the Falklands has Debt to GDP in excess of 100% and Falklands may feel themselves protected because the cost of defending them would be way in excess of their National Budget, cost of defending them by Britain; so that we always have to contextualize numbers when we use them.

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

**House resolves itself into a committee
House resumes**

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I have the Honour to report that a Bill for an Act to authorize the Government to raise funds for the Public Sector

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move that a Bill for an Act to authorize the Government to raise funds for the Public Sector Investment Programme 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
Public Sector Investment Programme
Read a third time by title
And passed without amendment**

2. **Proceeds of Crime and Money Laundering
(Prevention) (Amendment) Bill, 2012**

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move that a Bill for an Act to amend the Proceeds of Crime and Money Laundering Prevention Act, Chapter 181 of the Laws of St Vincent and the Grenadines revised Edition 2009 be read a first time. The purpose of the Bill, the reason is contained in the long title.

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

Question put and agreed to

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

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

Question put and agreed to

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move that a Bill for an Act to amend the Proceeds of Crime and Money Laundering Prevention Act, Chapter 18 of the Laws of St Vincent and the Grenadines revised Edition 2009 be read a second time.

Question put and agreed to

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Debate on the Bill.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, the Parent Act, the Proceeds of Crime and Money Laundering Prevention Act was passed in 2001 and it was amended subsequently in 2002 and in 2005. As in all matters, particularly in an area which is as innovative in our jurisdiction as this one, as the Act becomes operational; functioning we find certain matters which we need to tweak certain lacunae which we need to fill and certain limitations which we need to correct. And these are some small amendments but with important consequences.

Mr. Speaker, I will go through very briefly the amendments, they are not many. Clause No. 2 seeks to amend section 2 in order to remove any ambiguity as to which Members of the Royal St Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force may seize, detain and forfeit cash, pursuant to section 49 and 50. You see "police officer" in the amendment includes every Member of the Police Force and Custom Officers. The earlier formulation was "Police Officer includes a Custom's Officer" we want to spell it out with greater clarity. Clause No. 3 seeks to extend the scope of section 43. There is a lacunae in the Law with respect to the offence of laundering one's own proceeds of criminal conduct, this amendment is therefore necessary in order to criminalise self-laundering by way of simple possession whilst still criminalizing the acquisition, possession or use of another person's proceeds of criminal [inaudible] this is straightforward. Clause No 4 seeks to amend 45:2 in an attempt to prohibit tipping off as it relates to the filing of a suspicious activity report.

Mr. Speaker, the suspicious activity report is one of the important ways in which the Financial Intelligence Unit which is the companion enforcement agency for this Act that it comes into operation; one of the ways. There are a number of organisations which are listed they are obliged including the Credit Union, I see them present here, they are obliged to provide reports to the FIU known as suspicious activity reports. You will have dozens upon dozens of suspicious activity reports which are provided to the FIU but only a few of them are really acted upon simply because they have their own internal mechanism to screen those reports, which to proceed and those which are not being in full with which to proceed. But clearly you can see the mischief which can be done if there is a tipping off that a suspicious activity report has been made.

Suspicious activity report has to be made and made confidentially, so the Chief Executive Officer cannot be involved in doing it and then turning around and telling the person against whom the report is being made, tip

them off that a suspicious activity report had been submitted to the FIU for an investigation. To do so you will commit a criminal offence. There are several offences for tipping off already this is adding just another one.

Clause No. 5 will amend section 49:5 to make the provision consistent with the intent with the section. In the 2005 amendments section 49:1 was amended to allow for cash to be seized and detained anywhere within St Vincent and the Grenadines. Accordingly, the words “being imported into and exported from” were deleted from that subsection so subsection 5 was inadvertently not amended at the time. So that amendment is taking place to put that in order and to maintain logic; common sense.

Clause No. 6 the amendment of section 51 by this Clause seeks to address the current practical problem faced by the FIU and other law enforcement agency, of being unable to deposit into an interest bearing account a negotiable instrument which has been detained by an individual who refuses to endorse such an instrument. So, that you will see section 651 of the principal Act is amended by inserting a new subsection after subsection 1 and it is called 1(a) saying:-

“Negotiable instruments which have been lawfully detained shall be treated as if they have been endorsed once a detention order relating to the negotiating instrument has been produced to the Financial Institution”.

So that persons may say they are not endorsing, well the law is saying once it's detained we can put it in an interest bearing account you cannot tell me you are not endorsing. And that is obvious that you cannot have the person from whom you are detaining controlling the hand of the blade so to speak. And Clause No. 7 amends the first schedule of the principal Act by adding to the definition of financial institutions insurance intermediaries including insurance agents and brokers referred to in the Insurance Act and mutual fund administrators, managers and underwriters referred to in the Mutual Fund Act. Very straightforward, I am obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Further debate, Honourable Member.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I understand the practical nature of the amendment Bill and the reasons put forward by the originators of the Bill and of course the Honourable Prime Minister presenting the Bill in the House for the measures to, as I take it from the Prime Minister's presentation to tighten up certain aspects of the operation of the Bill. The explanations that were given do not appear to be ... they are not controversial in any sense and I just simply had one question that an interest in section 6 the amendment to paragraph 6 there that says that the negotiable interest shall be deposited in an interest bearing account to get around the failure to endorse that it would be deemed to have been endorsed and the idea is that interest would be collected on those funds, yes and to whose benefit would that be applied?

Mr. Speaker, the other aspects of the Bill they seemed to be fairly practical matters; the clarification of the definition of “police officer” it seems to me [interjection] uhm “law enforcement instead of police officer” okay. Mr. Speaker, that again I have no problem with it, it said it aids the administration of the Bill. And I would expect that from time to time if and even these amendments themselves becomes a problem that we would be seeing them back again in this House.

Giving the intentions and the explanations provided, Mr. Speaker, we have no problems in supporting.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Honourable Member for the Northern Grenadines acting Leader of the Opposition today, I did not intend that to be a mischievous statement, I noticed the other Vice President chuckled. I apologise if I erred [laughs]

Mr. Speaker, what would happen in relation to the negotiable instrument which is put in an interest bearing account if at the conclusion of the matter it turns out that that negotiable instrument ought not to be detained clearly all the proceeds go back to the payee of the negotiable instrument. If on the other hand it turns out that it constitutes the proceeds of crime or money laundering it would go to the confiscated asset fund which is set up under the law to put in assets which have been confiscated and for use in a number of diverse ways relating to law enforcement. So, I think that is only fair that the person if you are clean you get it back with interest, fair enough. If you are not clean it is a different story.

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

House resolves itself into a committee

House resumes

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I have the honour to report that a Bill for an Act to amend the Proceeds of Crime and Money Laundering Prevention Act Chapter 181 of the Laws of St Vincent and the Grenadines revised edition 2009 has passed the Committee stage without amendment.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members I beg to move that a Bill for an Act to amend the Proceeds of Crime and Money Laundering Prevention Act Chapter 181 of the Laws of St Vincent and the Grenadines revised edition 2009 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 for an Act to amend the Proceeds

Of Crime and Money Laundering Prevention

Act Chapter 181 of the Laws of St Vincent and the Grenadines,

Revised edition 2009 read a third time by title and passed.

3. Interviewing of Suspects of Serious Crimes Bill, 2012

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, this is a Bill, which we will just do the first reading and put it in committee.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move that a Bill for an Act to provide for the creation of the video and audio recording of suspects interviews by a law enforcement officer. The object and reason of the Bill is contained within that title.

That is to say; provide the legal framework so we can use video and audio recording of suspect interviews by a law enforcement officer. It makes it ... what it does, the provisions here, Mr. Speaker, would under one hand makes it difficult for somebody who is genuinely guilty to get away; so that you do not have a lot of technical arguments. You can see the video and you can hear the recording and also to get honest people off that they cannot get framed by the police; that what you talked is there, that they cannot say that you said something which you did not say. This is what we are bringing here and this is for the first reading, Mr. Speaker, I so move.

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

Question put and agreed to

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, the Members of the Select Committee on the Government side:-

- The Honourable Minister of Housing
- The Honourable Minister of Agriculture
- The Honourable Minister of Tourism
- The Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs
- The Honourable Minister of Transport and Works
- The Honourable Parliamentary Secretary (Senator Elvis Charles) and
- yours Truly, Mr. Speaker with the Honourable Attorney General.

That is seven, so we require five from the Opposition.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker:

- The Honourable Leader of the Opposition
- The Honourable Member for Central Kingstown
- The Honourable Member for South Leeward

How many is that three?

- The Honourable Senator Frederick and myself,
- The Honourable Member for Northern Grenadines

4. Co-operatives Societies Bill, 2012

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, we are very happy to see Members of the Credit Union Co-operative movement in the Stranger's Gallery, a peculiar notion the Stranger's Gallery: the

Gallery. They are not strangers because they are our masters; they put us here but that is the formulation in the book.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move a Bill for an Act to make new provision with respect to the registration, supervision, governance, operation and management of Co-operative Societies including Credit Unions, the Members of which have a common bond of philosophy and socio-economic objectives and for incidental and related purposes. I move that this be read a first time.

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

Question put and agreed to

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, we put this again too in Select Committee.

- The Honourable Minister of Education
- The Honourable Minister of Health
- The Honourable Minister of Co-operatives and Social Development
- The Honourable Minister of National Reconciliation
- The Honourable Senator Elvis Charles
- The Honourable Senator David Browne
- Yours Truly
- The Honourable Attorney General

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Opposition:-

- The Honourable Leader of the Opposition
- The Honourable Member for West Kingstown
- The Honourable Member for North Leeward
- The Honourable Member for the Southern Grenadines and
- Senator Baptiste

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, we have these two Bills to get through at the Select Committee and we have some other legislations to bring so I want to suggest 26th March to give us enough time; Monday 26th March.

I beg to move that this Honourable House do stand adjourned until the 26th March at 10:00 a.m. and Mr. Speaker, before I do so formally and it is seconded, I just want to congratulate all the Ministers who have had new assignments.

Question put and agreed to
House adjourned at 3:45 p. m. until
March 26th, 2012 at 10:00 a.m.