

No. 1

Tuesday

Third Session

4th December, 2012

Ninth Parliament

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

ADVANCE COPY

OFFICIAL REPORT

CONTENTS

Tuesday 4th December, 2012

Prayers	5
Papers	5
2013 Estimates of St. Vincent and the Grenadines	6
Announcement	59
Resolution	124
Suspension	128

THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE FIRST MEETING, THIRD 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.

SECOND SITTING

4th DECEMBER, 2012

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

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

PRAYERS

MR. SPEAKER IN THE CHAIR

Honourable Hendrick Alexander

Present

MEMBERS OF CABINET

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

Member for North Central Windward

Attorney General
Honourable Judith Jones-Morgan

Minister of Education/ Deputy
Prime Minister
Honourable Girlyn Miguel

Member for Marriaqua

Minister of Housing, Informal
Human Settlements, Physical Planning,

Member for East St. George

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

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE

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

Member for East Kingstown

Leader of the Opposition

ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
TUESDAY 4TH DECEMBER, 2012

PRAYERS

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

All right, just an announcement that the Leader of the Opposition is still on the mend and the Member for the Southern Grenadines will be late.

PAPERS

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to lay formally on the table of this Honourable House the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year 2013 with projections for the years 2014 and 2015. Mr. Speaker...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: As Honourable Members are aware, the Finance Committee met on Thursday. Unfortunately, the Minutes of the Finance Committee they are not here and under the rules of the House, the Minutes of the Finance Committee must first be presented before we can actually proceed with the debate, because Honourable Members do not know if any amendments were made, therefore this Honourable House would have to be suspended for another day. Mr. Speaker, this was done on Thursday, today is Tuesday. The Minutes are not very lengthy.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Are they not ready?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: The Minutes are not here. I inquired about them.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Madam Clerk, they are not ready?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I am not sure if I am told they would be ready in 10 minutes, in 15 minutes, in 20 minutes. The business of the House cannot be treated in this manner, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay, could we Honourable Prime Minister then suspend for a 10 minutes or 15 minutes and then let us know what is the position of the Minutes, if we can have them here by then,

because I would want to believe that they would have been written, but it is just a question that they are not presented. So let us suspend for 10 minutes or minutes and then we deal with the Minutes. House stands suspended.

House suspended at 9:10 a.m.

House resumed at 9:58 a. m.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Pray be seated. Let me express regret to this Honourable House for the unfortunate delay due to the nonappearance of the Minutes. We may now resume, Honourable Prime Minister.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay on the table the Minutes of the Finance Committee, but to report to Honourable Members that the Minutes are inadequate and therefore I would draw attention to two matters.

Honourable Members would see..., I lay this on the table, Mr. Speaker. Honourable Members would notice that on page 3 of the Minutes the third bullet said, Mr. Edwards also pointed out an error on page 628 of the date labels that had to be corrected. But the corrections were not noted. So I want to advise Honourable Members that at page 628, if Honourable Members would turn to that page, and from the column farthest to the right, the date should be 30th December, 2009 and the next column immediately to the left is the 30th December 2010 and then the column again to the left of that one is 30th December, 2011. Regarding..., and it is the 31st December, Honourable Members.

I want to turn to the bullet where the Budget Director, Mr. Jackson, brought up a correction to page 633 with the selected Debt Indicators. Honourable Members would see the column, the last rubric under 633 and two corrections are to be made, the fourth one listed, "Central Government Debt Service/Current Revenue 25.6 percent not 24.2 percent and obviously one of the other numbers of the two numbers below would be required to be changed and it would be the last one "Domestic Debt Service/Current Revenue will be 9.7 percent rather than 7.9 percent so that the external debt service to current revenue 15.9 plus 9.7 would give you the 25.6, okay colleagues, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members. Okay with that the Minutes are now intelligible.

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

Question put and agreed to.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, may I just simply add another, because Mr. Edwards and Mr. Jackson are not Members of the Finance Committee, you cannot refer to them saying anything. They would have drawn those to the attention of the Chairman and the Chairman would have formally drawn it to the attention of the meeting.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move the motion on the 2013 Estimates for St. Vincent and the Grenadines. It reads as follows:

WHEREAS Section 70(1) of the Constitution of St. Vincent and the Grenadines provides that the Minister for the time being responsible for finance shall cause to be prepared and laid before the House of Assembly before, or not later than thirty days after, the commencement of each financial year estimates of the revenues and expenditure of St. Vincent and the Grenadines for the financial year;

AND WHEREAS Section 70(2) of the Constitution provides for the approval of the Estimates of expenditure by the House;

AND WHEREAS the Government had additionally decided to prepare Estimates on a triennial basis.

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable House of Assembly do adopt the Estimates for the financial year ending 31st December, 2013.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Honourable House note the projections for the financial years ending 31st December, 2014 and 31st December, 2015.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I would just read the resolutions.

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable House of Assembly do adopt the Estimates for the financial year ending 31st December, 2013.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Honourable House note the projections for the financial years ending 31st December, 2014 and 31st December, 2015.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Debate on the Estimates.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the 2013 fiscal year amount to \$799,122,337. This represents an increase of 0.7 percent or \$5.21 million over the approved Budget for 2012. The marginal increase in the 2013 total Budget arises from a 2.2 percent increase in the Recurrent Expenditure Budget. The Budget for 2013 is made up of as follows:

The Recurrent Expenditure and the Amortization and sinking fund contributions amount to \$622, 224,875 and the Capital Expenditure of \$176,897,462. The funding for the 2012 Budget is comprised as follows:

Current revenue of \$508,538,100 and capital receipts totalling \$290,584,237. Mr. Speaker, one new current expenditure programme is approved in the 2013 Estimates. The Children Against Poverty Programme in the Ministry of National Mobilisation, Social Development, the family, persons and disability is new. This programme has been created to improve the academic performance and to promote positive attitudes among at risk primary school students. The details of this programme can be seen on pages 214 and 215 of the Estimates.

Twenty-six new positions, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, have been included in the Estimates under review in the following Ministries and Departments. The Ministry of Education, the Ministry of National Security, the Office of the DPP, the Service Commissions Department, the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment, the Ministry of Housing. Among the more important staff of increases are the following:

In Education, in support of the development of early childhood education, and Mr. Speaker, there is an ongoing thrust for the Government in early childhood education, part of the continuing Education Revolution, its deepening and broadening. Eight new positions are created under the preprimary programme as follows:

Four teacher (3) and four teacher (2) to staff four new early childhood centers within selected primary schools. Under the secondary programme at the West St. George Secondary School, one Library Assistant and one Laboratory Assistant are included to enhance the library and laboratory services at this magnificent school. At the newly established Education Research Information Communication Technology Department, there is new staff in the Estimates to provide administrative support. There is one Administrative Assistant and an Office Attendant.

At the Office of the Director of Public Prosecution, in preparation for the full establishment of the National Prosecutorial Service, Mr. Speaker, the following positions are established under this important judicial body, one Senior Prosecutor, one Senior Clerk and one Clerk Typist. Mr. Speaker, I should advise the Honourable House that the National Prosecutorial Service would include a number of police officers who are normally engaged in prosecuting in the Magistrates Court, the Court of summary jurisdiction.

In the Ministry of National Security at the Prisons Department, five more Prison Officers are provided to supplement the increase in staff already granted in previous annual Estimates to cope with the increased workload as a result of the commissioning of the Bell Isle Facility. Mr. Speaker, I should point out purely as an operational matter that even when we provide these five additional Prison Officers, we are going to have some strain still, because there are few Prison Officers who for one reason or the other are now currently been subjected to disciplinary proceedings and one would hope those proceedings would come to an end as soon as possible so that consequential events may follow those disciplinary proceedings.

The Recurrent Estimates, Mr. Speaker, the 2013 Recurrent Estimates inclusive of the Amortization and the Sinking Fund Contributions, because, Mr. Speaker, we continue to make the point that the Amortization and Sinking Fund Contributions are not properly part of the Recurrent Expenditure, just the debt servicing, but the Recurrent Estimates which as a matter of convenience are, include the Amortization and Sinking Fund Contribution, as I have said before amount to \$622,224,875. The current Budget current account, the budgeted current account deficit of \$25.4 million is \$4.1 million above the Budgeted current deficit for 2012.

Mr. Speaker, I should point out, half of this deficit of \$25.4 million is accounted for in the provisions for increase in salaries for public servants and retiring benefits. As I have said over and over, Mr. Speaker, running a deficit on the current account in particular circumstances for 3, 4, 5 or so years there is nothing intrinsically wrong with it, so long as you have a medium path framework, which we do have, for the prudence and enterprise in the management of the economic affairs of the country.

Current Revenue of 2013 is Budgeted at \$508.5 million. This represents a modest increase of 0.2 percent over the estimated revenue for 2012. Once again, the growth in revenue is expected to remain suppressed as a consequence of the slow recovery of the international economy. We are making efforts, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that we have as much enterprise in the economic system to hasten the growth, but we are also dependant very much on the vagaries of the international economy and of course, Mr. Speaker, we have to do much better in our tax administration, especially at Inland Revenue and at Customs.

Tax Revenue is expected to contribute \$469.8 million to the Consolidated Fund in 2013 while the revenue from non-tax sources is estimated at \$38.77 million. Although the overall collection of the current revenue is expected to remain stable in 2013 when compared to the Budgeted revenue for 2012, taxes on income and profits are anticipated to grow by 2.9 percent to \$126.6 million in 2013. The growth in revenue from Income Taxes is expected to come mainly from increased takings from individual taxpayers. The Government will collect an estimated \$191.4 million from taxes on international trade in 2013. This figure is a 2.5 percent or \$5 million below the 2012 Estimates for this category of taxes mainly as a result of lower Value Added Tax inflows. The 2012 estimated revenue from the input Value Added Tax was revised downwards from \$80 million to \$71.8 million or 10.2 percent based upon the actual performance of this tax up to September this year.

The recovery of the Value Added Tax is been slower than expected in 2012. This is the main factor that informed our 2013 Estimates for this tax. Mr. Speaker, again the question of tax administration within the context even of a slow recovery is a matter here to be addressed. In 2013 revenue from taxes and domestic transaction will contribute \$117.9 million to the public revenue. The Estimate is 1.2 percent or \$2.2 million more than the 2012 Budget for this group of taxes. The Value Added Tax with \$68 million and the stamp duty of \$22 million are expected to be the largest sources of revenue in this category of taxes. Collections from licenses will contribute an estimated \$30.1 million to the Consolidated Fund in 2013, an increase of 1.7 percent when compared with the 2012 Budget for this tax group. Vehicles, drivers, yachts and Alien Landholding Licence would account for \$22.8 million or 75.7 percent of the revenue from this source. A total of \$38.8 million in revenue is expected to be collected from non-tax sources in 2013. This represents an increase of 7.2 percent or \$2.6 million when compared with the approved Budget for this item in 2012. The full details of the current revenue estimates are found on pages 113 of the 2013 Estimates.

Mr. Speaker, I should point out we have been conservative in looking at our revenue from say Alien Landholding licences even though we anticipate that there would be an increase take from that particular category given the expectation that early in the New Year we would begin to have the transactions, more transactions taking place in Canouan from the development which is taking place at the moment and we have noticed that towards the end of this year that there has been a moderate pick up at Mustique in this regard. Expenditure, the total estimated Recurrent Expenditure inclusive of the Amortization and Sinking Fund Contributions is \$622,224,875 an increase of 2 percent or 13.2 million when compared with the approved Budget of 2012. The Recurrent Expenditure for 2013 is made up as follows:

Current Expenditure \$533.9 million, we have Amortization of \$82.8 million, Sinking Fund Contribution of \$5.5 million, giving us \$622.2 million. Three items, Mr. Speaker, of Recurrent Expenditure are registering increases in the 2013 Budget. These are wages and salaries 4.5 percent or \$11.3 million. Pensions and NIS 4.5 percent or

\$2.1 million as I have indicated earlier, Mr. Speaker, you would notice that those alone are \$13.3 million, more than half of the current account deficit and Amortization an increase of 8.5 million. The Budgets for all items of recurrent outlays have been produced as follows:

MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a request of the Honourable Prime Minister to the extent that I can be accommodated. The figures of wages and salaries and pensions and NIS, could we have an indication of what numbers of persons we are speaking to in the Civil Service. I know we can do some arithmetic from the evidence here before us, but within the area of pension and NIS, NIS is a little bit more difficult, because they are the retired numbers which are not as accessible. So what is the size of the Civil Service that we are talking about and the number of pensioners if we can get ballpark figures?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, let me say this, these are increases and an increase for salaries for instance would come about as a consequence of, and I do not know if my Honourable Member [interjection] no, no, no, but I am dealing here now with the increases. The increases for wages and salaries are the far bigger one as you can see from the Estimates. There are 26 new positions, but 26 new positions are not going to provide you with the extent of \$11.3 million, so that is really de minimis in so far as the increase is concerned. What is taking place there is the additional 1.5 percent increase, plus of course the normal increment for the public servants and that is why the figure has gone to that level. But if you were to deal with the public service you have just over 2000 Civil Servants, you have about 1700 teachers, you have just over 1000 policemen, give and take a few numbers. I did not come prepared with the actual numbers, but I think I can give you an indication to assist you in your reflection [interjection] yes, I hope that satisfies, yes.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that if I need five more minutes at the end, this is as a consequence of satisfying the inquiry of my Honourable Friend. The Budgets for all other items of recurrent outlays have been reduced as follows. Goods and Services 6.1 percent or \$4.6 million; Sinking Fund Contributions 8.3 percent or \$0.5 million; Other Transfers 2.3 percent or \$2.3 million; and Interest Payments, very important to note Mr. Speaker, Interest Payments declined by 2.4 percent or \$1.2 million. The summary of the Recurrent Expenditure Budget by economic categories is as follows: Wages and salaries \$261.9 million, pensions and NIS \$49.2 million, other transfers \$101.1 million, debt service \$138.5 million, goods and services \$71.5 million, giving you the grand total of \$622.2 million.

Mr. Speaker, I should point out by way of an explanation that in relation to other transfers, Honourable Members would have seen an increase in transfers over the recent years; this is largely because the Tourism Authority has been established so that there are persons who have to be moved to the Tourism Authority and new persons employed there. BRAGSA, the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College was put as an autonomous entity; those persons would normally have been listed as teachers in the Ministry of Education, and the Standards Bureau which is no longer just a department, but an autonomous entity also. I make that point, Mr. Speaker, because sometimes if you just deal with numbers and you do not know the story behind the numbers, one can be led astray.

Wages and Salaries, the 2013 Budget for wages and salaries is made up as follows: salaries \$225.6 million, allowance \$18.1 million, wages \$18.3 million, \$262 million in all. The salaries Budget which reflects the automatic increments and the 1.5 percent salary increase registers an increase of approximately 4.6 percent when compared to the salaries bill for 2012. With respect to the remaining 1.5 percent increase of the 3 percent which had been agreed to be paid to, to the public servants from January 2011, I give the commitment again that as soon as the fiscal and economic circumstance is allowed, and the public servants know they can trust my word as always, it will be paid retroactive to January 2011.

We will make an assessment of our ability to pay this increase by the end of June 2013, by the end of June next year. In 2013 allowances are estimated to increase by \$1 million or 5.7 percent when compared with the approved Budget for 2012. The main drivers for this increase are the Children Against Poverty Programme where it is Budgeted to pay an allowance for facilitators and an increase in the graduate allowance to pay Civil Servants who have successfully graduated with a Degree.

Mr. Speaker, I should explain here that sometimes when a graduate comes back, there may not be a position for the graduate, someone who would say Senior Clerk or an Executive Officer, they will come back to their..., nominally to their previous position, the position at which they left, but they will be paid their graduate allowance and of course in the social organisation of labour within the public service they will be given duties clearly attendant upon those of a graduate.

Wages are expected to increase by 1.9 percent in 2013 when compared to the approved wages Budget in 2012 as a result of the 1.5 percent increase in the wage announced recently to go from 2011, but also for some categories of workers a 2 percent from January 2010.

Retirement benefits, in 2012 the amount provided to pay pensions to retired Civil Servants and Government counterpart contributions to the NIS for Civil Servants currently employed is \$47.1 million. This figure is up by \$2.1 million or 4.5 percent over the approved Budget for 2012. The amount is comprised of pensions \$40 million, NIS contribution \$9.2 million, a total of \$49.2 million. The question of pension reform Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, has been put on the table for policy consideration. This is a very sensitive area of reform and must be tackled sensibly and in open consultation with all stakeholders to ensure that a feasible solution is found. I will have more to say on this subject when I present my Budget address in January next year.

I turn, Mr. Speaker, to other transfers. Transfer payments to local, regional and international organisations and individuals are estimated at \$101 million in 2013. This figure represents a decline of 9.2 percent relative to the approved Budget of 2012. A summary of the expenditure items that make up this heading are as follows: Grants and Contributions \$75.7 million, Training \$6.5 million, Social Welfare Payments \$18.9 million, every effort has been made in 2013 Estimates to apply the principles of prudence in providing for these items. Accordingly, the Budgets for Grants and Contributions, Training and Welfare Payments have been reduced by 0.6 percent, 19.5 percent and 1.5 percent respectively.

The decline in the Budget of 1.5 percent for Social Welfare with payments does not in any way reduce public assistant benefits. A total of \$17.5 million is provided for this purpose and this amount is unchanged from the

approved 2012 Budget. Mr. Speaker, I should advise Honourable Members that the small decline has taken place there because in 2012 we have had and indeed in 2011, we had several payments of a social welfare nature arising out of Hurricane Tomas, the April floods of 2011 and of course Black Sigatoka, contributions which were made to the farmers. The occasion for the same level in respect of those has been altered and other initiatives are being taken in these respects.

As at September 30th 2012, the total public debt amounted to \$1,312,445,314; \$1.3 billion, this figure is 7.4 percent above the total disbursed outstanding public debt for the comparative period in 2011. The total domestic debt which amounted to \$565.1 million as at September 30th this year increased by 15 percent or \$73.8 million when compared with the domestic debt for the same period in 2011. The external debt for the same period stood at \$747.3 million an increase of \$17 million or 2.3 percent when compared with the external debt as at September 2011. The increase in domestic debt was due mainly to the following:

1. A net increase of \$26.6 million in amortized bond resulting from new borrowings via a \$40 million, 7.5 percent bond and the repayment of \$13.4 million on existing amortized bonds. So you take away the \$13.4 from the \$40 and you get the \$26.6 million.
2. An increase, Honourable Members, would recall that at the beginning in the Budget for 2012 part financing of the capital Budget was by way of bonds of EC\$40 million. An increase of \$19.6 million in loans driven by a further draw down of \$13.7 million on the IADC PetroCaribe Loan, and
3. The IADC being the international Airport Development Company, an increase of \$20 million in Government payables.

And we are making special arrangements as I will point out in the Estimates to pay those payables which in fact I should point out, Mr. Speaker, are not payables to the private sector, but to public sector entities. The main factors behind the movement of the external public debt are as follows: a total of \$51.4 million was repaid on a number of loans and bonds among these are the following: \$11.9 million on the Caribbean Development Bank Loans, \$4.6 million on the European Investment Bank Loan, and \$27.4 million on bonds. Mr. Speaker, the details are available in the Appendix dealing with the public debt.

Mr. Speaker, the reason why I am going through all of this on the public debt here today in such detail and with all the openness and transparency as befits good governance is that I read and hear so much ill informed discussions on this subject. Let us just deal with the facts. We can have different opinions, but we must have the facts.

Secondly in regard to the external public debt, Mr. Speaker, I say this, a total of \$68.2 million in new debt was drawn down over the period under review. These are:

- a. A further draw down on the ALBA Loan of \$62 million and

- b. A new loan which was contracted with the CARICOM Development Fund (CDF) in the sum of \$6.2 million to finance aspects of the International Airport Project.

So, Mr. Speaker, the public debt as at the 30th September 2011, is comprised as follows: domestic debt \$565.1 million amounting to 43.1 percent of the total debt. External debt \$747.3 million, 56.9 percent of the total debt and Mr. Speaker, as Honourable Members are aware, the external debt is almost entirely on very concessionary terms. Total debt service for 2013 is estimated to be \$138.5 million or 27 percent of current revenue. The debt service requirements for 2013 are made up as follows: interest payments \$50.2 million, amortization \$82.98 million, sinking fund contribution \$5.5 million, giving a total of \$138.5 million and more details on the public debt can be found on pages 627 to 633 of the Estimates.

Goods and Services. The Budget for the expenditure on Goods and Services in 2013 is \$71.4 million. Mr. Speaker, may I just say this to draw to Honourable Members attention that the debt to GDP ratio of 68.8 percent is the lowest debt to GDP ratio in the member countries of the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union [applause] and I want to say, Mr. Speaker, lest anyone thinks that I am..., this is just an afterthought and that I am making up the numbers as I go along, that is why I have the indicators at the bottom of the debt schedule and one would see that the first indicator, total debt to GDP is 68.8 percent. The Budget for expenditure on goods and services in 2013 is 71.4 million, after a careful review of the actual expenditure trends of the items that make up the spending category, we were able to identify some areas where the Budget could be reduced without being detrimental to the services being provided. As a consequence in the 2013 Budget, goods and services amount to \$4.6 million or 6.1 percent below the 2012 Estimates.

Ministries and Departments must therefore make every effort to eliminate waste and more proactively manage costs. We have to ensure that the accounting officers have a tighter grip on expenditure on goods and services. The details, Mr. Speaker, on the year and the year movement of expenditure items under goods and services can be seen on Roman numerals V in the summary of Recurrent Expenditure by standard object code in the Estimates. An analysis of the current Budget by functional classification pinpoints the main, the areas of focus of the Government over the next year. Four functional areas account for 77.6 percent of the Recurrent Budget for 2013. These functional areas are general public services; there is a total of \$204 million or 32 percent of the Budget.

Education, \$196.7 million of the Recurrent Budget amounting to 19.4 percent, I mean, this is incredible. We are not [inaudible], we are not backing away from strengthening, deepening the Education Revolution [applause]. Economic affairs, this is the Recurrent Budget, \$85.1 million or 13.7 percent of the Recurrent Budget and social protection \$73.1 million, which is a substantial sum or 11.8 percent of the Budget. The summary of the Recurrent Budget by functional classification can be found at Roman numerals II of the Estimates, the guidelines which explains what items are included under the various functional heads is found on the page Roman numerals XVII that is to say 17 to 19, XIX Roman numerals.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Mr. Speaker, I did not want to interrupt, but I am hearing a lot of inconsistencies with what the Prime Minister is saying and what is in the document before me. A case in point,

percentage on education I see 17 percent, I heard you say 19, I do not know what..., and I am hearing this throughout your presentation.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, if you look just simply at the Ministry of Education, you will see one figure, but Education goes beyond. I am dealing here with the functional classification, I was very specific. I say the functional classification [interjection] yes Mr. Speaker XVII to XIX. Capital Estimates, Mr. Speaker, take for instance, take for instance, take for instance...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Just a second, you do not have that page? I have a single page I do not know if it is that. It is that? [Interjection] hello! [Interjection] Okay.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Fine. Yes Mr. Speaker, take for instance in the functional classification and education, you do not..., you include the Ministry of Education and other areas, you take for instance the Community College which is not part of the specific Ministry of Education that, you see that under grants and contributions in the Appendix that is \$12.5 million [applause]. You will see \$6 million \$6.5 million in respect of the Public Service Commissions for Education and Training. You will see under the Ministry of Finance \$6.5 million in respect of payments for the University of the West Indies, all those are payments, all those under the functional classifications, Mr. Speaker, Education which are not contained within the Ministry of Education itself.

Capital Estimates, the 2013 Capital Estimates amount to \$176.9 million this figure represents a 4.3 percent \$8.3 million reduction when compared with the approved capital Budget for 2012. The planned capital spending for 2013 is concentrated in five Ministries which together account for 78.3 percent or \$138.5 million of the Capital Estimates for 2013. Mr. Speaker, it follows that the Public Servants and those responsible for these five Ministries from day one must be on top of the ball. The first Mr. Speaker is the Ministry of Transport and Works, which has been allocated 18.6 percent or \$33 million of the capital Budget. The Ministry of Education, where \$30 million or 17 percent of the capital Budget has been approved, 17 percent of the capital Budget has been provided. The allocation is 5.3 percent above the amount which was allocated to it in the 2012 Budget.

The Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning which accounts for 16.5 percent of the 2013 capital Budget, the sum of \$29.1 million or 36.2 percent greater than the amount allocated to this Ministry in 2012.

Mr. Speaker, for instance you will find in the Ministry of Finance and Planning a lot of money there for the Disaster Reduction Project. One may ask, why is it that that is there and not say under Ministry of National Security with disaster with NEMO or maybe in relation to the health? The point is this, it is under Planning because of the number of cross cutting issues and this funding comes through the World Bank.

The fourth Ministry, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of National Security has been provided with \$24.3 million or 13.8 percent of the 2013 capital Budget and five the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment has been allocated 12.4 percent of the Budget or \$22 million of the capital Budget for 2013. This represents an 18.3 percent increase over the allocation provided to this Ministry in 2012 and the reason for this is because the focal

sector health with the funding from the European Union principally will begin in honest 2013 and continue for three years.

An analysis of the Capital Budget, Mr. Speaker, by main functional classification heads reveals that 75.5 percent of the Budget or \$133.2 million is accounted for by four of the nine functional heads, the four big ones.

1. Economic Affairs, they receive a share of 36.8 percent of the capital Budget. This investment programme which is estimated at \$65 million is intended to stimulate growth in the major productive sectors of the economy.
2. Education which accounts for 17 percent of the capital Budget for \$30 million.
3. Environmental protection \$21.2 million or 12 percent of the capital Budget and
4. Health \$20.6 million or 9.6 percent of the capital Budget.

Those are the functional classifications. The full summary of the capital Budget by functional classification can be found on page Roman numerals II of the Estimates.

Mr. Speaker, I now provide some details on several of the more important projects included in the Budget under the four functional heads that account for 75 percent of the capital Budget, namely Economic Affairs, Education, Environmental Protection and Health.

Economic Affairs, this has the largest share of the capital Budget. Projects financed under this heading includes major infrastructure development such as roads, bridges, and airport infrastructure. The productive sectors of Tourism, Agriculture, and Telecommunications are also included under this heading of economic affairs. Some of the larger projects included in the functional area are The Argyle International Airport, a contribution here of \$10 million from a Venezuela loan and I specified the source, Mr. Speaker, because there is the story that the airport is sucking all of the Government Recurrent monies. I mean it is just a myth, complete myth. I have addressed that before, but it is repeated, you cannot stop people saying it if they want to say it, but let us have the facts and then we can have an intelligent debate.

The E. T. Joshua Airport Improvement \$3.5 million, we have to do improvements on the E. T. Joshua Airport next year again, because you know the landing strip and all that we have to keep it in good order. The rehabilitation of the Colonarie Bridge \$2.5 million, rehabilitation of the South Leeward Highway, we are now finally getting somewhere with this \$3 million, the rehabilitation of the Vigie Highway \$6.8 million, the Vigie Highway goes all up into Mespo that is what it is called [interjection] coming around, right round to Peruvian Vale, quite correct. The rehabilitation of the Murrays Road \$1.2 million, tourism and private sector development \$7.9 million, agricultural modernization and development \$3.2 million, farm support through small machinery \$1.3 million and then three important telecommunications initiatives the e-grip project \$1.9 million, the CARSIP project \$2.1 million, and the Government PBX \$1.7 million.

Education, in this sector several large projects or plan in 2013 aimed at improving the school plant, developing further Technical and Vocational Education and integrating ICT within the teaching, learning process. Among some of the more important projects are the following: improvement of education through ICT (Information, Communications Technology) \$14.6 million. A significant amount of that you go at the Community College at Villa and you see what is taking place. Basic education \$24.1 million, Technical Vocational Education and Training \$3 million, expansion of secondary schools \$1 million, the book loan scheme \$1 million, purchase of equipment and furniture \$1 million, and the Grammar School and High School Development \$1 million.

Regarding environmental protection, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Mr. Speaker, is a small island developing state that is extremely vulnerable to natural disasters. Our fragile eco-system is highly susceptible also to the vagaries of climate change; we must therefore make the requisite investment to enhance our resilience and disaster response capabilities. To this end a number of projects have been included in the 2013 Estimates. Among these are the National Disaster Management Rehabilitation \$5.2 million, what is called, "The Regional Disaster Vulnerability Reduction" \$7.7 million and Emergency Recovery Project \$6.9 million.

Mr. Speaker, this is a matter of the greatest importance, environmental protection. Our vulnerability to natural disasters is not episodic; it is part of the DNA of a country like St. Vincent and the Grenadines, part of its makeup and resources have to be allocated of a significant quantity for this purpose.

Health. In the health sector a number of interventions of a capital nature have been planned for 2013. These projects seek to further develop and modernise the sector by improving and expanding the physical plant, equipment and other infrastructure. The most significant of these projects are the following: the Modern Medical Complex \$9 million, the modernization and I should say, Mr. Speaker, the funding for that \$9 million is already available, modernization of the health sector the 10th EDF \$7.9 million, the oxygen plant and bulk storage \$1 million, PAHO, WHO \$900,000 and the refurbishment of the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital a ½ of million dollars, this is in addition to work which takes place through the modernization of the health sector which would include the Mental Health for instance.

Mr. Speaker, one of the challenges which we have for this year I should say and we are cogitating on it to do some of the substantive work which we need to do at Mental Health. We are going to require some temporary transitional accommodation. Of course, because of the peculiarity of this particular area, it is one which requires a great deal of creativity as how we are going to solve that particular conundrum to have some facility. Mr. Speaker, the details of the entire capital estimates are found on pages 581 to 623.

Capital receipts, the financing for the capital Budget amounts to \$290.6 million. Domestic receipts \$73.6 million or 28 percent, capital revenue \$16.1 million, loans \$57.5 million and external receipts \$216.9 million or 74.9 percent of the capital Budget. Grants \$50.1 million a 17.2 percent of the external receipts, loans \$54.1 million or 18.6 percent of the external receipts and other receipts \$112.7 million giving you a grand total of \$290.5 million. In the 2013 Budget, a total of \$73.6 million will be raised from domestic sources to finance the capital Budget. Revenue from the sale of Government assets namely crown lands and Bank of St. Vincent and the Grenadines Shares will yield \$16.1 million while local loans in the sum of \$57.7 million will also be raised. For the external receipts, grants continue to remain an important source of funding for the capital Budget for

2013. Of the \$40.2 million of grants to flow from multilateral donors in 2013, the European Union will provide \$29.9 million or 74.3 percent of this amount.

The CDB (Caribbean Development Bank) is also expected to contribute \$4.6 million or 11.3 percent of the total grants for multilateral sources. The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines will receive grants totaling \$9.9 million mainly from two friendly Governments the Republic of China on Taiwan \$7.8 million and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela \$1.3 million. In respect of external loans of the total \$54.1 million that is expected to be raised in 2013, \$26.2 million would flow from multilateral creditors and \$28 million will come from bilateral sources. The Caribbean Development Bank with \$12 million and the World Bank \$14.8 million are the main sources of multilateral loan financing and these are soft loans. Also the Governments of the Republic of China on Taiwan and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela will provide \$13.9 million and \$12.3 million in loans to finance the 2013 capital Budget, again these are soft loans. The details of capital receipts anticipated in 2013 are shown on Roman numerals page VII.

Mr. Speaker, these Estimates have been crafted in continuing challenging times, but this Government does not embrace the pessimism of those who only see problems and do not see solutions. This Government is not preoccupied in conjugating every possible verb connected to helplessness nor are we engaged in the declension of every single noun which touches and concerns despondency. We believe in the resilience of our people. We have a framework and we working to that framework and I may say this, Mr. Speaker, as will be made clear in the Budget presentation, these Estimates are part housekeeping, part developmental, but there is also a huge amount of developmental work which takes place outside of the Estimates in public enterprises and investments through the private sector and foreign direct investments.

I make that final point, Mr. Speaker, to provide a contextual frame in which we present this housekeeping and developmental exercise, but a development exercise which accounts for only part of the development which takes place in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. I am obliged [applause].

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make my contribution to the debate of the 2013 Estimates. Mr. Speaker, as important as this exercise is we know that sometimes it can be very dry and technical and even as flowery as the Prime Minister might have been in his winding up there, I am sure that some of the people who are listening might have drifted off as he was going through all the figures and, as he would call them, facts.

Nonetheless, it is part of the exercise, Mr. Speaker, for us to look at the Estimates as they are presented in this House and as I have before, the importance of being accurate, Mr. Speaker, when the Estimates are presented as much as possible, you know they are called Estimates not guesstimates, so we understand that the figures might be a little off here and there from the projections for 2013 because we have not arrived there yet, but as this has been done over and over by the technical people in the various Ministries, we expect that they would have some reasonable indication as to what the actual expenditures would be and also what the actual take, the revenue will be.

Mr. Speaker, every year when we have the Budgetary exercise starting with the Estimates moving into the Budget debate there is an attempt to characterise it as to what is the theme. I did not hear the Prime Minister specify any particular theme yet, maybe he is saving it for the Budget, but he referred back to prudence which I know was theme that he developed last year. But prudence, Mr. Speaker, is useful when it is applied in a timely manner. You cannot bolt the door after the..., or close the door after the horse has bolted.

Mr. Speaker, the Estimates also is an indication ought to be of how the Government prioritizes its function. Whether they intend to focus on..., we all know, every Government, even as wealthy as the United States of America, they have to prioritize because in the nature of politics it is an exercise in the distribution of scarce resources. So we have to look very carefully at the facts, the figures, and the comments that were made to determine what the Government's priorities are.

What it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, from looking at the figures in the Estimates as presented for 2013 is that it confirms essentially what we have said in this Honourable House and elsewhere is that this Budget really is one that recognises the difficult circumstances. It is one of austerity which is essentially being imposed without the words being used. You look at the overall picture and the Honourable Leader of the Opposition over the years has educated this House and this nation, Mr. Speaker, about the nature of the Budgetary exercise where amounts are allocated on paper and they seem to balance neatly, but in reality we know that the various Ministries will have to engage in some very difficult decision making to cut here and cut there because as the Prime Minister has noted the current revenue does not meet the requirements of current expenditure. I think he says that the figure is \$25 million or thereabout, but we have had this debate over and over in this House where the Amortization and Sinking Fund component of the expenditures, they must be paid so they must be factored in, Mr. Speaker, in terms of what the total deficit will be and this year if my arithmetic is correct, Mr. Speaker, we have a current expenditure of \$622.2 million roughly and the revenue of \$508.5 million and the total current deficit of \$113,686,775.

Over the years this amount has grown steadily. Even alarmingly, I think last year it was \$103 million and in the accounting, its offset by other receipts under the capital side of the summary on page I, Roman numeral I, in the original it was \$113,686,775 the exact amount as the current deficit. The corrected version has it at \$112,686,775. I mean much have been said about this, Mr. Speaker, in the past and which is that, it really is mainly an accounting exercise, because we have never come anywhere near recovering \$100 million in other capital receipts. Realistic I think we had calculated..., the Leader of the Opposition in past Budgetary exercises that it averaged somewhere around \$3 million. So what it means is that the continuing deficit is there and that is what is putting the squeeze, Mr. Speaker, on the various Ministries, because although it adds up on paper as I said, in reality you have to find the money and if you cannot find it, you will have to cut somewhere and if you look at the Estimates, Mr. Speaker, you would see many of the Ministries wherever there are local contributions to be made by the Government to various programmes, social programmes, there is a \$2 million here, a \$5 million there, but all across the board there are cuts in those various programmes.

Of course the external obligations have to be paid so those reflect the requirements of whatever agreements we are in or institutions we are part of and if you look at those you would see that most of them have gone up under grants and contributions, because we do not really have much control over them. But the point is, Mr. Speaker,

that the fact that we have been running these deficits and we have to account for them at some point the real hard tasks of making the expenditure match the current revenue has to begin. Under the years in the New Democratic Party I was reminded by someone this morning that the current revenue that column always exceeded the current expenditure, because they always try to put aside something to go towards the capital programmes.

This Government has not done that. Now the Prime Minister has said there is nothing wrong with running a deficit for a few years, but you know when you get into that habit, it becomes a situation where it is very, very difficult to correct. Those of us who listen and follow the news in the United States about the debates about the fiscal cliff and so on, where they are coming to terms with their own deficits and debts will understand the slippery slope that that takes us down.

Mr. Speaker, essentially what it means is more pain for people and cuts in Government services. It means that wages and salaries are not going to increase. So primarily if you look at Roman numeral I you would see, Mr. Speaker, that the approved Estimates for 2012 wages and salaries accounted for \$250,637.03 in 2012 and in 2013 this is projected to increase to \$261.9 million. As the Prime Minister indicated and which our own analysis had indicated that increase of \$11 million is accounted for by the 1.5 percent increase that is promised to public servants and by the normal incremental increases, so in effect there is no increase in wages and salaries beyond what was committed to be paid before and if you look, Mr. Speaker, at the projections even for 2014 in 2013 it is projected to be \$261.9 million that is wages and salaries, in 2014 it is projected to be even less \$259.9 million.

So Mr. Speaker, at a time when many of the essential services of Government of having to tighten their belts and people having to buy more medicine for themselves because the hospitals and the clinics do not have enough and students having to buy more books because the Book Loan Scheme does not provide enough or on a timely basis, but at that time, Mr. Speaker, the public servants are also looking forward to no salary increases, it is not projected until at least 2015 when it goes up to \$265 million.

So Mr. Speaker, what we have been talking about over the years it was not just pie on the side, you can be creative, Mr. Speaker, but you cannot avoid the simple arithmetic of expenditure and revenue and this is, Mr. Speaker, where we are today and I would look at some of the areas where we have had serious, some of it cuts, others gradual cuts but continuing from year to year which affect the quality of lives that people live in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. But before I do that I want to draw attention, Mr. Speaker, as well to Roman numeral I the Estimates of revenue that is tax revenue for 2013, 2014. There is a reduction from 2012 which was \$471.1 million to \$469.7 million in 2013, but in 2014 there is a fairly sizeable increase to \$486.6 million and then it is projected to go up to \$504.5 million 2015. This suggests, Mr. Speaker, that there are substantial tax revenues which may be accounted for by tax increases.

I would think that the property tax increases that were projected for 2012, those are already included in the 2012 Estimates as \$471 million and 2013 \$469 million. So for 2014 to go up to \$486 million and the following year to \$504 million, it is either we are going to have some sort of explosion in the economy where things are growing at a tremendously rapid rate or that somewhere the Government is going to get tax revenue from the

people to deal with the difficult circumstances that we have gotten ourselves in that I have been speaking about in the earlier part of my presentation.

Mr. Speaker, I have to deal with areas under my own portfolio. As you know we on this side...

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: You mean shadow portfolio [laughter].

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Maybe I am..., I will correct the Prime Minister just now. Yes, Mr. Speaker, we in the Opposition we have Opposition portfolios. We deal with issues, Mr. Speaker, that the Ministers come to this House very often and do not bother to deal with especially when it comes to the Estimates Debate.

I wish to look at some of the areas, Mr. Speaker, I spoke about the cuts where they are affected and just quickly, if we look at grants and contributions to local organisation which I spoke about on page 634 of the Estimates, you have in 2012 \$59.8 million allocated, in 2013 it is down to \$57.4 million, so roughly \$2.4 million decrease and let us look at some of the areas, Mr. Speaker, that have been affected. If you look at page..., take the Ministry of National Mobilization page 638 you will see where the shaving takes place. Estimates for 2012 National Youth Council is Budgeted \$4,500 in 2013 instead of going up, because we obviously like the young people so much it goes down to \$3,600. Boys Scout from \$4,000 down to \$3,200; Girl Guides from \$4,000 down to \$2,300 and all the way down that list, Mr. Speaker, Boys Brigade, Girls Brigade, all of them have had decreases. The National Youth Exchange from \$15,000 in 2012 down to \$12,000 in 2013 Our Lady of Guadeloupe Home for Girls \$30,000 in 2012 down to \$20,000 in 2013 so it is a 1/3 decrease.

So, Mr. Speaker, Roving Caregivers you know one of the essential services provided to our elderly and shut-ins from \$10,000 down to \$8,000, Marion House an important institution from \$50,000 down to \$40,000 [interjection] okay well you can explain that, but in any event the point is that the services are being reduced. You can accept the correction. The point is Mr. Speaker, we look even at the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Cadet Force on the other page 639 something that we had put forward in our own proposal, the Spiritual and Redemption Charter that these institutions need to be beefed up and included so that the young people could have something to do \$120,000 in 2012 down to \$96,000 in 2013 and you could go on and on and on, Mr. Speaker.

My own Ministry where I shadow [laughter] we look, Mr. Speaker, at the transfers to SVG Tourism Authority in 2012 it was \$13 million in 2013 it is the same \$13 million even though as I will show that the Ministry of Tourism is essentially in a state of crisis in terms of the performance of the Tourism Industry over the past year and in certain segments of the industry over the past 8, 9, 10 years.

We look at BRAGSA on page 640 grants and contributions, BRAGSA was granted \$16.5 million in 2012 and in 2013 it is down \$2.5 million to \$14 million. Now anybody knows the condition of the roads in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the various public buildings that BRAGSA is reputed to be in-charged or responsible for. We know that if anything you would be looking for increases to this institution to meet the deficits that have become so apparent.

In this Honourable House, Mr. Speaker, from day to day we have brought questions about the various roads, buildings all over the place that need urgent repairs and the Minister responsible has essentially said there is no money and when the Minister of Finance allocates it we will deal with the problem recognising the reality, Mr. Speaker, the problems are real.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Fort Hill road down to do...

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Fort Hill, what you mean Hamilton? Very good. So Mr. Speaker, those are some of the indications and we might think well okay, it is only taking \$2 million here or \$2000 there or \$50,000 there, but when you are doing it year after year at a time, Mr. Speaker, when wages and salaries are not going up, when people are being laid off in the private sector you could understand that we are really in times of austerity in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. It is only left Mr. Speaker, for the word to be used by your administration. Mr. Speaker, in the Ministry of..., Mr. Speaker, how much more time do I have?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: You have utilised 24 and ½ minutes of the time.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, in the Ministry of Tourism, what we have here, Mr. Speaker, and I see the Honourable Minister is perking up in the air, so it is good at least to be paying attention, what we have, Mr. Speaker, in the Estimates here, first of all as I said, the overall transfers to the Tourism Authority remains the same from 2012 to 2013 even though the performance of the Ministry of Tourism has not been one that I am sure the Minister is proud of. We look at stay over visitors for 2012 there was a forecast for an increase of 3 percent, there was an increase of 2.6 percent in 2012. Same day visitors had been projected to increase by 5 percent; it had a whopping decline of 24.3 percent. Yacht visitors projected to increase by my view by a modest 5 percent, declined again by 0.6 percent according to your own figures. Cruise tourism projected to increase in 2012 by 5 percent, decreased by 16.6 percent.

So you can see, Mr. Speaker, that we have been taking one step forward and 2 steps backward. Perhaps some will say more in the Ministry of Tourism. Yet the allocations, we talk about priorities, the allocation to the Ministry since the Ministry of Tourism, the Tourism Authority does the bulk of the promotion overseas and basically is the engine in that Ministry, the allocation does not reflect, Mr. Speaker, any concern for these figures that are presented here in these Estimates. So the next step, Mr. Speaker, has to be that the Minister has to be very creative in using or exhorting the authority to use the funds that have been allocated more effectively to get a bigger bang for a buck, because it has not been happening so far.

And we can go through in detail, Mr. Speaker, the results indicators on page 541 for example. You would see that many of the targets that were set were not met. The radio and TV ads Mr. Speaker that were to be developed according to the indicators, it says, this was put off to the third quarter so maybe when the Minister speaks, he will let us know when it was actually accomplished. They said that there would be three newsletters that would be produced; only one was produced. A photography contest, I suppose this is to sensitize local people about the importance of the tourism industry, they said it was set for October 2012, and I suppose that part was not corrected, so the Minister would say whether it was done or not. It was not done up to the point of

October, 2012. A National Recognition Awards this again was not done; it was put off to November 2012, so perhaps the Minister can say again if this was done.

At page 545 Mr. Speaker, this is why I say that the funding is so important. A lot of the reasons why the objectives had not been met in such an important Ministry as the Ministry of Tourism are because of a lack of funding. We look at page 545, it says half way down the page, one of the results indicators as we continue the work and the implementation of National Heritage Project, it says, thus far, that is the result, no funds have been released to commence this project. At the top of the page, the same page, complete the erection of the newly design signs under the national standards project. It says that it would be prioritise given the funding available. Further down the page, to commence work on the rehabilitation of Fort Murray in Union Island and Trinity Falls site, thus far funds have not been released to commence this project. The same page, continue to raise public awareness of the importance of Protected Areas and their link to protecting and conserving biodiversity, this will be done through collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and other relevant agencies and stakeholders, example, radio chit chat, TV ads. Result, airing and radio ads are not yet funded and this is not just the Ministry of Tourism, Mr. Speaker.

You look at the other Ministries as well and you would see this lack of funding, lack of funding being one of the main reasons for the failure to implement projects. But Mr. Speaker, the reason why I highlight them so much in this Ministry is because we all acknowledge at the Ministry of Tourism and Tourism as an economic activity is vital presently to the economic health of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. So we would want to see, Mr. Speaker, more urgency in the Government and Minister of Finance in ensuring that the funds are made available for this Ministry to perform its work properly and the current Estimates do not reflect that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, you heard me speak many times and I am sure you listened to all the radio stations. I spoke about the situation with yachting. Not because I have a particular passion, because Mr. Speaker, it is the critically and important component of about tourism industry and one of the result indicators suggest that the Minister will consult with the stakeholders in the yachting sector to address the problems related to safety and security, harassment and other undesirable conduct. We know, Mr. Speaker, from my own pleading in this Honourable House and from others who have brought it to the attention of the Minister that we still have not had the response required. Regular meetings are what the result indicators said, regular meetings were held with stakeholders regarding the safety of the yachting sector. Efforts are being made by the relevant authorities to acquire an engine for a vessel to conduct patrolling, particularly in Bequia, Cumberland stakeholders have started an informal community policing. I mean, how long does it take to get an engine for a boat?

There are fellers in Paget Farm they could source one very quickly if the funding is made available. I suspect that is what the problem is. But you cannot kill the goose that lays the golden egg Mr. Speaker. This is a very serious problem. I will say more about it when we get to the Budget.

Under Tourism, Mr. Speaker, there is also the ongoing and continuing issue of regularising and organising the water taxi people. I do not know if they like the name boat boys, but that is what is written here, but they are service providers in the tourism sector and what is important, Mr. Speaker, is that they are very often the first contact that the people who are coming on the yachts have with us here in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. It is

critically important that that first impression is a good impression and I know that there are many people in my own constituency who are in this business who would wish to see the recognition they get that they get more recognition as essential service providers and that there are ways and means, Mr. Speaker, for them to do their work in a way that is appreciated, recognized, respected and valued as an important part of our tourism industry. And I note here that there is continued the process through direct consultation with stakeholders and the formation of a water front service provider both by the association. But Mr. Speaker, some of the people who are providing the service now would be retired before anything is done at the rate that this administration is proceeding, because for ten years I have been hearing the same thing and nothing has been done. So again I am sure that the Minister, the new Minister relatively speaking is not particularly happy with that.

Mr. Speaker, I want to also speak about another area that is in the Minister's portfolio but it is not Tourism and that has to do with Sports. Now before I do that, I just want to acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, I saw in the Estimates here to that funds have been allocated for the hospitality and marine institute. It said that construction started in June of this year; that is true, eh? In August of this year and that is welcome news. Mr. Speaker, again this is one of things that really can make a difference in the service to provide and maybe it will come a regional institution, not just an institution to St. Vincent and the Grenadines, but it has been dragging or been dragged slowly through this House and the various deliberations in the Ministry and I suppose in Cabinet and still after 11 years in office, Mr. Speaker, it has not seen the light of day. At the time when we acknowledge that Tourism is the single most important foreign exchange earner in this country.

The economic activity to which we look for future gains in terms of improving the prospects of jobs and improving standards of living here in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and yet, Mr. Speaker, these essential things that ought to be put in place are being dealt with as if they are routine activities of Government. There must be some urgency in it.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: You have 9 minutes to conclude.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Now the Sports matter and I think the Honourable Minister knows what I am going to talk about. The Clive Tannis Playing Field, Mr. Speaker, is under his portfolio as well and he told me, Mr. Speaker, in answer to a question in this Honourable House that provisions will be made in the 2013 Estimates for the repairs of that facility and I must say it is one of the first things I looked for in the Estimates and unless, Mr. Speaker, it is hidden somewhere, and we look at page 622 where I cannot find it, I have not seen any allocation to the fixing of that playing field.

If you look page 622 there is an allocation of \$140,000 for community playing fields and hard court and you go over to the right hand side of the page at 623, it says to construct pavilions and washrooms at various playing fields. If that is the allocation that the Minister is talking about that is for 2013 then I do not see how you can divide that amount to several playing fields [interjection] eh? [Interjection] \$900. There is an allocation lower down for the Campden Park Playing Field [interjection] \$908 [interjection] yes 622. I see 900802 and 900804; the point is Mr. Speaker, the allocation is not there and maybe the Minister [interjection] I saw that, that is the one I was quoting you 900603; \$140,000 so that is something that needs to be done and I do not think the allocation is here, so maybe I have to take the Prime Minister up with his offer where he said the National

Lottery will put \$75,000 to fixing it early next year and I hope that that is a commitment, Mr. Speaker, that next time I come back to the House I can say that the Prime Minister has delivered on it. Not the same I can say for the Honourable Minister.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, if my Honourable friend would give way. He may recalled that I also said that he and I could also raise some monies together from a number of persons in Bequia presumably including those who want to give US\$5 per person to save democracy, but he had not..., he had indicated no he was not going to take any part in that, so he is..., I would have hoped that he would reconsider that and join me in raising monies to help to repair the playing field from a community standpoint in addition to whatever we put from the National Lottery. He has an opportunity again, because I know he has been raising monies for other purposes. I have been hearing it on radio.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, 5 minutes.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Mr. Speaker, this is not a matter that has to be contingent and what funds I can raise. This is a serious matter as the Minister knows, he has seen it and I hope that he will put pressure on the Honourable Prime Minister to come up with the funds.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: You ducking me, you ducking me.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Now the..., I wish Mr. Speaker, to speak about another important aspect of, well it is culture, but it is also part of our tourism. You know in the allocations that were made for the Ministry of Tourism in the old days you use to have money paid to the Bequia Tourism Association, the Union Island Tourism Association and so on and so forth. Now that is all seems to be..., it is not disaggregated, so we do not know how much funds are being paid to these institutions. But what I want to say Mr. Speaker is that there is talk in these Estimates here about event tourism to try and develop the various events.

We have in the Northern Grenadines in Bequia, in Mustique, in St. Vincent on the mainland as well various events that have been developed successfully. Take for example the Music Fest that is being done in Bequia, this is something, Mr. Speaker, needs to be recognise that there need to be allocation in the Recurrent Expenditures for persons to give support to these kinds of activities on a regular basis. We cannot always rely on individuals to donate their time. They will always do that, but sometimes the administrative work gets too much, Mr. Speaker, and it is time that we recognise that they are doing it for the benefit of our communities, but that we as a whole reap tremendous benefits from having these activities when they grow and become successful. So perhaps when the Minister speaks he will say that he will provide some assistance, at least this year to the Music Fest so that they can have some administrative support to assist them to do a bigger and better job of promoting this activity for all of us.

You have Nine Morning here in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Carnival Development Corporation gets sizeable support. Union Island Easterval these are all activities and then the mind have to be trained, Mr.

Speaker, and developing activities not just in the tourist season, but later on in the year as well to try and attract people in the slow months. That is where the attention needs to be put.

Now Mr. Speaker, I am doing my own little bit. I would like to in the last few minutes that I have, as we are not going to have Budget address to wish everyone in my constituency a Merry Christmas. We are doing something, Mr. Speaker, in the community under the Almond Tree having Christmas under the Almond Tree where it is going to be lit up and every night there is going to be performances there from various groups, schools, churches, individuals, village groups, professionals and semi-professional artists and so on, on a voluntary basis and this is something, Mr. Speaker, that the community is doing to enjoy Christmas more, but which also has the potential, Mr. Speaker, to become an activity that also promotes tourism in St. Vincent and the Grenadines that also brings people into the community there and perhaps even in time into the country if we invest the time and the resources into getting it done.

Mr. Speaker, I want also to extend my Christmas greetings to my colleagues on this side of the House, to the Members on the Government side, to all the staff in this Honourable House Mr. Speaker and to you, to wish that we have an enjoyable Christmas. I know times are hard, but it is precisely when times are hard, Mr. Speaker, that we should reach out to one another as a community to try to do what we can to help each other through the tough times and particularly in the Christmas Season to live through true spirit of giving and having Christ in the Christmas.

Mr. Speaker, in the New Year we have very serious challenges to confront and when we come to the Budget Address, I am sure that there will be much more that we on this side will offer to the Government, not just by way of criticism only, but by way of suggestion as to how this country should be run and how, Mr. Speaker, it can be done in a way that is better in terms of producing jobs and increasing the standard of living in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Because what we have had in the past four years, probably five years is economic decline one year after another and eventually that begins to bite and it takes the joy and the expectations and the hope out of Christmas except for those, Mr. Speaker, who are the most resilient and who work hard to try and make things better for their community. So thank you, Mr. Speaker, and God bless.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Any further debate, Honourable Member for South Leeward, sorry. You shall begin.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to make my contribution to this debate on the Estimates for 2013. but first of all I want to take the opportunity to recognise the fact that it is again the mercies of God that has brought me here and I really would never fail to acknowledge the fact that it is nothing that I have done on my own that has kept me alive today, because there are many persons that I have known that are no longer with us and on this I want to take the opportunity to express my sincerest sympathy to those of my colleagues, especially on the other side who would have lost some loved ones. I am saying this because I understand naturally what it feels to lose a brother, because I remember in 2005 just before..., one day before my launching in Campden Park my own brother was buried. So I understand the grief and the pain that is associated with death.

But Mr. Speaker, it is something in as much as we may never understand it and there are many questions we would want to ask with respect to death, it really should remind us of our own mortality and that we are not an entity unto ourselves and as such, Mr. Speaker, we as Members of this Honourable House must recognise that there is one factor in life that equates order for us and that is the fact that death will one day visit us and therefore, Mr. Speaker, it is incumbent on all of us to ensure that we give an account for the stewardship, because God has predestinated everyone of us for such a time as this, especially for those of us who are in this Honourable House so that we would conduct ourselves in an exemplary manner and that those persons who voted us or for the work that we have done to be here will recognise that what we are doing is worthy of honour.

Mr. Speaker, the Estimates that is before us today, I know a number of Vincentians are anticipating these Estimates with great expectation, because what we have in here with the Estimates being presented to this Honourable House is a situation where Vincentians by and large are going to look at it and say within themselves whether or not there is a prospect for a better life in 2013. But Mr. Speaker, if I were to just with your permission, because we are still in 2012 to just ask those of us who are listening, how has our lives really changed since we have the 2012 Budget presentation on the Estimates? Did our lives changed for the better or were there challenges that seemed to be insurmountable?

I am saying this, Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that I know many people out there look forward to the Budget that is designed to improving their lives. But having seeing the performance of the Government, particularly with the fact that we have had a deficit on the current account, I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that most persons would glean from that, that that is one of the contributing factors for the difficulties that they have had for 2012. I say that, Mr. Speaker, because before us in 2013 we have another Estimates that is presented in this Honourable House and I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but the Estimates of 2013 bears a striking resemblance to that of 2012, only that it is worst and if your lives were really challenging, if your lives were very difficult in 2012, then I am saying, Mr. Speaker, there is precious little to look forward to in 2013.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to take a few minutes to just look at the Financial Summary for 2013 and looking at the current account, let us start with the current expenditure. We notice well the sub-total, we notice that the Government intends to spend \$622 million or let us say \$622.2 million and it is hoping to collect \$508.5 million. Now for everybody who has an understanding of accounting, we are in a deficit and I know I have heard Members on the other side who have said before that they have encouraged the presentation of a deficit Budget especially with respect to the current side. Well they will have their reasons for that, Mr. Speaker, but the reality is the Government is going to find it very difficult to meet its obligation simply because it is going to, in its Estimates as we have seen presented here, it is going to collect less money than is required to take care of its business.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at the current expenditure and there are those items that will recall, every month the Government has to find the resources, the money to take care of these businesses. We look at wages and salaries, Mr. Speaker, and if I were to just make a slight comparison with 2012 we notice that in the Estimates for 2013 we have an allocation of \$261.9 million for wages and salaries and Mr. Speaker, that is an increase over last year of \$11.2 million and I have heard some explanations from the Honourable Prime Minister and quite naturally, I can understand why there is an increase. But I am still thinking, Mr. Speaker, that Wages and

Salaries could have been a little less than that, especially in light of the fact that there are some persons who in my opinion really should not be collecting wages and salaries at this point in time, but that I will elaborate on during the Budget debate.

There is also an increase of \$2.1 million with respect to pension and NIS this year over last year, well for 2013 over last year, but interestingly, Mr. Speaker, when we look at other transfers and this is a category that really should be of importance of interest to every Vincentian, because what we have in the Estimates for 2013 Mr. Speaker is \$101 million basically allocated for other transfer that amounts, Mr. Speaker, to \$2.3 million less basically from last year and we have been making the point from this side of the Honourable House, Mr. Speaker, that there are statutory bodies which do not necessarily attract any income independently in any significant way and as such, Mr. Speaker, they are entirely dependent on the coffers of the Government for transfers to run the affairs of that particular corporation. So what we are saying here, Mr. Speaker, is that there will be this year \$2.3 million less.

Interestingly though, one of the entities under this category, Mr. Speaker, is one that everybody is familiar with now that is called "BRAGSA". Now, Mr. Speaker, everybody knows that the name was changed from Public Works which really have the responsibility for repairing roads and repairing buildings and building them and so on. So Mr. Speaker, until I am able to see a physical allocation for that particular Ministry and I know that the Honourable Minister of Works in his presentation may want to give us or shed some light with respect to how much money is really allocated there and see whether or not his Ministry is going to be impacted negatively because of the decrease in this allocation.

But Mr. Speaker, from what we have seen throughout 2012, because BRAGSA is dependent on monies transferred to them from the Government coffers; we notice how sluggish their performance has been with respect to road repairs. A little later on I will actually talk more about roads, because I notice again that there is an attempt..., well at least it is in the Estimates to have the South Leeward Highway have some work done on it, but I will look at that a little later on.

HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER: Well it is on paper.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Precisely [laughter] but, Mr. Speaker, the point is if there is not any money available, then the projects cannot be performed, not only can they not be performed, but whatever attempts are made cannot be performed effectively, efficiently and in a reasonable time. That is why we have had so much stress, those of us from the Leeward side with respects to those roads.

Mr. Speaker, the other category that I just want to look at very briefly this time is goods and services. This category, Mr. Speaker, we have an allocation of \$71.4 million and that is \$4.6 million less than was projected last year. Mr. Speaker, every department of the Government relies on this category to supply them with materials and unfortunately too, Mr. Speaker, is the hospital nor the health clinics and so on. So if we are seeing that a reduction in the allocation for this particular category goods and services, it means and I am assuming here based on what I have seen occurred in 2012 that people are going to find it very difficult to get very basic medications again from those health centers including the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital.

But I am absolutely sure, Mr. Speaker, that there is a reason for this, because I remember my late uncle and former member of this Parliament, Othniel Sylvester, he uses to say to us whenever we go to his desk and see all the confusion and state that the desk is in, he will say that there is order in my madness and he was able to find everything in all of that, but the minute we clean up the desk, he cannot find anything. So I am absolutely certain that in all this madness there might be some order and I am anticipating I am really waiting to see the performance for 2013.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at the capital expenditure and again very, very briefly, we see general public services an allocation of \$14.1 million and that is an increase slightly over last year. Public order and safety has reduced to \$8.9 million. Mr. Speaker, again this is something that I would really pay some attention to during the Budget debate, but I have to say looking at the face of this or looking at what has happened, what has transpired in 2012 and the years before that we have had serious problems and respect to crime and criminal activities and so on and again the Government is allocating less money for public order and safety. Again they must have some order in this madness.

Economic Affairs are down, environmental protection is down, but I have to note here, Mr. Speaker, that the Honourable Prime Minister in his presentation did allude to the fact that he is taking very seriously the issue of environmental protection. Again I am absolutely sure that he has an explanation because environmental protection, the allocation for 2013 is lower. But there is one thing that I love though I will address that a little lower down, especially with respect to community development, because I have seen some indications where there will be river defences and so on, I am sure that this is a part of it. But there are other critical areas that have been excluded; I am hoping that the Government is going to find the funding somehow to look at those other areas.

Mr. Speaker, Housing and Community Amenities that too has declined. Well I am delighted to say that there is an increase, a very, very, very marginal increase in the amount of money allocated for health. I am hoping that this is going to translate into the poor people who go to those health centers being able to get the very basic necessities that were not afforded to them in 2012. Mr. Speaker, as I have said, I am really anticipating that something is going to take place. But before I conclude this, Mr. Speaker, I was making the point and I hope that people understand the reason why I was itemizing some of these different areas, different categories of the Government is that it was really an intention to show that there is a reduction in Government spending.

And I am really wondering, Mr. Speaker, because I have heard over and over that we were visited by the IMF and the IMF would have made certain recommendations and one of those recommendations is that they would love to see the Government cut spending and this, Mr. Speaker, is one of the things that people do not really like to hear about. When we have spending being cut on the part of the Government it means that there is less prospect for employment and if a Government is going to take a decision to cut spending understanding the fact that...

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: If my Honourable friend will give way. Mr. Speaker, if my Honourable friend is seeking to identify this or that piece of item in the Budget on which there might have been a declined, but it is not proper for him to say that there is a decrease in the overall spending in the

Government, because the Budget for 2013 is \$5.21 million more than the approved Budget for 2012. It is nearly 1 percent more than the year for 2012. Mr. Speaker, what do you make of the comment that you are talking about actual? The actual outturn has not yet come. My Honourable friend from South Leeward was talking about Estimates. If one wants us to talk about actual, we can have a debate on that.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I think you should just address the Honourable...

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: But I am just addressing the issue, Mr. Speaker, if he wants to say on this item there has been a decline and this one there has been an increase, please let us have the facts. But do not say that overall that there has been a decline in the Estimated amount of money to be spent, because that is not true.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay. Thank you; well the evidence is there, Honourable Member.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, may I ask you how much time I have please?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: You only have 20 minutes remaining, you only into the 20th minute.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Okay thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, [Interjection] I think it would do you good to try to control your own team, the affairs of your own team. Mr. Speaker, I will continue, but I want to say though that I believe that this Government is conducting some form of austerity practice that is the point I am making here. It is difficult yes I know that every Government will love to see more activities take place where its citizens would have opportunity for employment, but based on the figures that are before us, Mr. Speaker, it does not take a genius to know that significant aspects of the economy there is cut backs and as such it would affect the lifestyle, the way of life of the Vincentian people [applause]. That is why I was making the point earlier on that there has to be some of form order in this madness and the ultimate order here, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that I believe that the Government is following secretly on implementing an austerity programme.

Mr. Speaker, I will move on and I would look very briefly at the Ministry of Social Development. This Ministry, Mr. Speaker, is one that in my own mind is of much importance, real significance, because this is the one that seeks to transform the way of life of the Vincentian people socially and I have read through, Mr. Speaker, from pages 177 to 190 and I noted that between all of that, well I counted 99 objectives between those pages and for that Ministry, Mr. Speaker, I notice that poverty alleviation was mentioned two times. So for this particular Ministry who would have as its objective to more or less have a transformation from welfarism to development and from distributive to transformative, I would have love to see a little bit more emphasis place on poverty alleviation. However, Mr. Speaker, two mentions were made as I have said and that have to do with the CAP programme. I know that the Honourable Prime Minister did made mention of that and I applaud that particular Ministry for that particular programme because I notice here that 1300 children and 60 parents are likely to be impacted if this particular objective is achieved. [Interjection] is it 1500? [Interjection] well I thought I saw 1300 there. That is the CAP programme 1300 children whose lives are intended to see some form

of improvement and 60 parents. But that is an initiative that I would really applaud, but I am simply saying here, Mr. Speaker, that I would have love to see a lot more emphasis placed on the reduction of poverty. Because when I remember from the Estimates of 2012 you know, I saw the objective there big and bold that you know there is going to be poverty alleviation, but when you look at the result indicator sadly there was no funding for it [interjection] well you going to have to be the judge of that. Do you want to increase the deficit or do you want to have an increase in the number of people who are living in poverty?

Mr. Speaker, I move on, Community Development and that is on page 179. I notice again that this was brought forward from 2012 Estimates, retrofitting Community Centres, Rillan Hill, Rose Bank, Rose Hall, but I am really not happy, Mr. Speaker, with the rate at which this work is going on and I speak especially for Rillan Hill in light of the fact that that Community Centre is a hurricane shelter.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: You hard to go with boy.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: It is a hurricane shelter, Mr. Speaker, and I really want to thank God that we have not had any storm this year, because I wonder where those persons from Rillan Hill would have run to for some safe haven. I will move on, Mr. Speaker and I notice also that there is some indication or there were some indication of Campden Park you know also, but I am hoping, Mr. Minister, maybe you can guide me in respect to this, when I see mentioned of the Campden Park also some form of retrofitting, I assumed that it is the Campden Park Community Centre. But interestingly for 2013 that fall off the radar, there is no work there for that particular centre in as much as there was mention of it earlier on.

Mr. Speaker, I want to move on to the South Leeward Highway and that is in the Ministry of Transport. I take excerpt, Mr. Speaker, from pages 412 and 608, but I notice here that we have \$2 million allocated for work on the South Leeward Highway that is from the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital down to Layou. But when you look at the objective, it is saying that the tender for this project has been delayed and has been delayed pending the approval of a loan from the CDB. So Mr. Speaker, there is precious little to look forward to and I hope that the people on the Leeward zone who commuting there on a daily basis do not start getting excited because they see an allocation of \$2 million, because there is nothing in this Estimates that tell us that work will definitely be done on that highway and that is a highway, Mr. Speaker, I have said it before, it is the most deplorable piece of road or network of road in the entire country and again, 2013 and we cannot have anything definitive as to when we would be able to drive in peace [interjection] you see that is the bottom line, there is no money. Absolutely no money, it is the Government that is broke, it is the Government that really has no creativity, no initiative and there is no prospect of any improvement under this administration.

Mr. Speaker, I move on page 610 and this makes reference to the Vermont Francois Bridge. Now Mr. Speaker, I was almost tempted to call it the infamous bridge, but I notice that in the result indicators it is said that the project has been delayed because of informal settlers that have to be removed. Well as far as I am concerned there is only one property there in question and Mr. Speaker, [interjection] all right, thank you very much, good, good, good I am delighted that you know that is seven people who are living there, because a threat was issued to these people, ultimatum was given to them that if they do not move within a particular time, their house

would be pushed in the river and if that is not bad enough they will have to pay the demolition cost. So I am very happy that you know that such an action would have had serious negative effect for a family of seven.

Mr. Speaker, the bridge is very important. It is very important to all of us and Honourable Minister I would love to see you get this bridge done as soon as possible. It is a bridge that has my blessing, Mr. Speaker, because, Mr. Speaker, I know that that river is a menacing torrent when it is in flood and it is difficult for people to be walking you know from Retreat to get up to Francois when a van could go up to “Condal” as we call it in Vermont and drive across to Francois. But Mr. Speaker, the point I am making here is that the delay in my opinion had absolutely nothing to do with informal settlers, but with respect to the fact that the powers that be did not want to offer the compensation that was allocated for the removal of that particular family. That is the real reason why the people in Vermont and Francois have not had that bridge today. I notice that for this year there would \$770,000 towards that project. I am hoping as I have seen that it should be completed in the second quarter of 2013, I am looking forward to that with great anticipation.

Mr. Speaker, I turn my attention very briefly..., may I ask how much time do I have now please, Mr. Speaker?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: 19 minutes, sorry I revise that, 15 minutes [laughter].

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: All right, Mr. Speaker, I will be done within that time. Mr. Speaker, I just want to look at sports very briefly and I know my Honourable colleague on this side made some reference to sports, but again, Mr. Speaker, I have to really wonder base on the Estimates that are before us today whether or not the Government is serious about sports in this country. Nobody needs to tell us that young people can earn a living through sports. We have just had the conclusion of the Olympics and we have seen the glory that Caribbean athletes enjoyed and I am absolutely sure that there would be some economic spill over to the country by and large. With those causes, Mr. Speaker, those countries that have had athletes excelling at the Olympics had one thing in common, they had a national stadium. For 11 years Mr. Speaker, we have been talking about a national stadium. Today 2013 the Estimates that is before us, all that we are seeing and you know the Estimated cost of this particular project is in the vicinity of \$47 million, but Mr. Speaker, \$150,000 is allocated to our national stadium development. What is that going to do? What is that going to do Mr. Speaker? I believe now, I am absolutely convinced that the talents that we have here will all go by the wayside simply because this Government has neglected sports [applause].

Mr. Speaker, the Campden Park Playing Field, I am seeing that there is a projected cost of \$420,000 for the development of this playing field, that is to construct pavilion, change room facilities and so on. Every year, Mr. Speaker, we notice that there is a sum of money allocated for this Campden Park Playing Field Development. All of that is that it is declining and I am seeing again, Mr. Speaker, this year an allocation of \$200,000 for the development of the playing field. I just need to remind us, Mr. Speaker, that it is in a very, very bad condition and that facility is used by students of the Lowmans Leeward Anglican School, it is used by students of the Bethel High School, it is used by students of the Clare Valley Government School and also the Questelles Government School. Why am I saying all of this, Mr. Speaker, is simply to highlight the fact that that facility as it is does not even have a washroom and with all those kids going down there to participate in their school sports and the other activities that take place there, because the members of the South Leeward

Sports Association conduct cricket, football, netball every single year there, but if somebody wants to do a number there is nowhere to go. I am really thinking, Mr. Speaker, that it is about time the Government shows some urgency and some concern to all those persons who are using that facility, because I have the impression that because it is Campden Park they really do not care too much about it.

Mr. Speaker, the indoor sports facility, a lot of talk we have heard on this matter and when I heard that there is going to be an indoor sports facility, I welcome the idea. I was looking forward to the day when that is going to happen because Mr. Speaker, if people are going to develop their skills to their maximum potential there will be need for a proper surface, a proper synthetic surface. You know, Mr. Speaker, take for example volley ball, basket ball or net ball, and think about those persons who are playing those sporting disciplines on very hard concrete surfaces. I really do not think that they are going to excel because some persons are going to be scared to hit the concrete but in an indoor sports facility, Mr. Speaker, there is ideal synthetic surface and we see them if we are serious when we watch basket ball and so on. It is the same surface that is found in an indoor sports facility. But how long is it taking for that to be realized. Well I am not to say that it is in the result indicator, we are seeing that the stakeholders here they are going to be collaborating with people in authority to ensure that this becomes a reality. So since you have been talking about an indoor sports facility, you are still collaborating with people? I think you know I asked the question about that sometime earlier this year and I was told that they are working on the design. Well maybe the design has not started.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: If my Honourable friend would give way, Mr. Speaker, I was asked the question about the National Lottery Facility; it is not in the Budget because the National Lottery is financing this. They have purchased the facility, they have purchased the site down at..., where the old glove factory was and they are working assiduously at it, but the simple fact is it Mr. Speaker, the Anglican Primary School was for all practical purposes destroyed unusable and that is where the Anglican School has the current refuge and this is sometimes some of the difficulties which you have and those things have been announced in the public domain.

Mr. Speaker, the second issue if the Honourable Member is in tune with what the Football Federation is doing and the Athletic Association and the meetings which they have had including people coming here, he will know what is the approach to the National Stadium. It is as simple as that.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable Member, you have remaining 6 minutes.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, the simple fact is we are still waiting on the National Stadium and it is about time we stop the talking [applause] let us stop all this talking, Mr. Speaker, and let us see things come into reality.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: If you do not want to understand what I am saying...,

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: And the other thing too you know, Mr. Speaker, I will tell you what I understand, I understand from you, Mr. Speaker...,

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: From me?

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Not you Mr. Speaker [laughter] I understand also that with respect to the indoor sports facility..., but I mean I will deal with this mainly during the Budget you know...,

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: You cannot deal with nothing, no time.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member let us...,

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: No, no, no, no, you see...,

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member...,

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: The Honourable Member there bears no significance to me so I will not even respond [laughter]. Now Mr. Speaker, what I understand as I was saying is that that particular area you see, we talk, talk, talk without substance, a lot of people do that, is all talk and no action, no substance. I am, Mr. Speaker, that there are plans to have a port at Bottom Town. How far away is it from the same facility in question here for the indoors sport facility, how far away is it, how is that going to have implication for that particular plan? But I tell you what I understand, Mr. Speaker, we will talk about that later on.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: You really do not have a concept at all.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: But you are hopeless, you are hopeless and I am hoping.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member,

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Mr. Speaker,

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Just a minute please. You have a few minutes remaining, would you try and use it up including giving greetings.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: But why is he interrupting me, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Including giving greetings.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: If he interrupts me then I am inclined to respond.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I am hopeless?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Just go ahead.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: You are hopeless yes, as far as I am concerned. You have the unenviable position of being the only Prime Minister who has led St. Vincent into four years of negative growth.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, that is an error.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Take that [laughter].

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

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Mr. Speaker, he has not risen on a point of order, he has arisen on nothing, so I am not going to give way.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a Point of Order.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: He is standing on a point of order.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: The point of order, Mr. Speaker, is that the Honourable Member continues like the rest of the Opposition to speak an untruth. The fact is this; there was negative growth in 2008, 2009 and 2010 that is three years. There was positive growth in 2004 [laughter] and if I may add Mr. Speaker..., 2011 sorry [laughter].

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: You do not know what you are talking about.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: The positive growth, Mr. Speaker, which we have had last year 2011 is higher than the average for the OECS and our performance between 2008 and 2011 is better than the average in the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union [applause] these are the facts.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Mr. Prime Minister....,

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Once I have facts you know I can debate them.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Let us acknowledge the facts and let us move from there. Honourable Member I am only going to entertain you on greetings now if you have any greetings to give.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: I see I am going to give my greetings, but I want to..., I really just want to rebuke....,

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Would you move on with the greetings?

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: I will move on, Mr. Speaker. I just want to take the opportunity to....,

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Perhaps you want to rebuke me, go ahead.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: No, no, no I wanted to rebuke the devil, not you.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Oh, [laughter] I thought was me you want to rebuke.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: No, no, not you. Mr. Speaker, I want to take the opportunity under the circumstances you know...,

[Crosstalk]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, please allow him to finish.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: I know that people refer to this time as the most wonderful time of the year, but Mr. Speaker, in my opinion it is a time of wonder, it is a time when most Vincentians and especially those in South Leeward would be wondering how they are going to spend this Christmas. So I am taking the opportunity to express under the circumstances, under the very difficult and trying circumstances my best wishes for the Christmas season and I am encouraging you to use whatever limited resources you have wisely and do not lavish everything for Christmas, because base on the Estimates that is before us for 2013 we can say in no uncertain terms that very difficult times will be ahead [applause].

Mr. Speaker, I take the opportunity also to wish you a very Merry Christmas and to you Madam Clerk and the rest of your Office, I wish you a very Merry Christmas and every Member of this Honourable House, on my side and on your side. I really hope above all things that God is going to spare us and prosperous in health so that we would come back here in the New Year to work in the best interest of the people. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker [applause].

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Any further debate? Prime Minister you are going lunch now? Any further..., oh Honourable Member, Honourable Senator you..., [interjection] I will tell you that in a few minutes. [Interjection] yes and there was an answer I said I will tell you that in few minutes, so in the meanwhile you can go ahead with your...,

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICKS: So I will start in a few minutes?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: No you go ahead with your debate please.

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK: Very well. Good morning, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to lend my voice to this debate on the Estimates that are presented for 2013. In looking at the Estimates I wish to advise all present Honourable Members that I will be looking at what the Honourable Leader likes to refer to as..., the Leader of the Opposition likes to refer to as a snapshot, the financial summary and pages 586 – 587 relating to the Capital Estimates, 576 relating to Culture and I wish to speak generally about what is been happening in ICT.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: You start with that again [laughter].

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK: And with regards specifically to ICT, not only with regard to what happens in the Office of the Prime Minister or at least under that rubric, but also in Education where ICT development has been taking place.

Well let me start, Mr. Speaker, by placing these Estimates into a wider context, because usefully the Honourable Prime Minister, every year I believe the intention is to indicate to the [interjection] very well. Just for the benefit of all Members I believe that after my presentation we will break for lunch [laughter]. The Honourable Prime Minister very usefully every year gives some kind of indication on how he wants the direction of the country to be perceived, understood and appreciated. So in various articles, speeches and presentations and indeed in the presentation of the Estimates, the thinking I believe is to give the general public an idea of what we are doing, how we are doing and what we intend to do and how we intend to do it.

Earlier on in these presentations which have been happening every year either at Independence or at other times during the year, earlier on there was a lot of jubilation about reaping fruit and the harvest that Vincentians were supposed to be enjoying under the stewardship of his administration, but over the last four to five years I would say that has given way to the use of language that says to anybody listening that times are no longer as wonderful as they once were. The big blame game that takes place, blames the failure of the international economy and the failure of the economy to recover itself internationally and the Government wants us to understand that we are just small states that will be impacted by the vagaries of this reality. So when the first world is not doing well, well you know we would not do well and so the basket that the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines have over the last four years been repeatedly asked to hold is that all of this pain that we are feeling has really to do with the failure..., largely to do with the failure of the international economy to recover quick enough and the failure of that or that reality impacting on our small economy and our small interconnected economy, interconnected with the other economies of the OECS, the other economies of CARICOM, so basically, we are reminded that we are hopeful and optimistic and resilient people and that we will overcome this hard time if we just stay the course.

And so we were told that five years ago, four years ago, three years ago, two years ago, one year ago and this year, when I thought that we were not going to hear it Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Prime Minister said that we..., right here, he said that he is not interested in conjugating verbs that has to do with helplessness that we are essentially a resilient people. We are resilient people, but my question has to be exactly how much licks are we expected to take [applause] before some sort of light at the end of this tunnel is going to come, because all of the nicely couched language does not hide the fact that things are hard for all Vincentians.

A friend of my have a way of saying, well he sucking sweetie now, the other day he said to me you know the sweetie getting smaller, so even for those who sucking sweetie is drying up and so I look to these Estimates to firstly understand what we are earning and how we intend to spend it to kind of get an inkling of whether I should continue to be hopeful, although it is fundamentally wovening the fabric of personality to be hopeful. Should I hold back the people who want to react to the fact that their times are so hard by saying, look this is something that is going to come, I have it here in writing, I see it here in the Estimates, these are the kinds of

improvements that are going to take place, this is the strategy, even if they are not telling you that this is the plan, this is how I understand it so that I could give people something to hold on to in this hard time.

But Mr. Speaker, when..., and let me preface what I am going say by saying that it is a matter of confidence. Can we reasonable expect the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to continue to have confidence in this Government given the direction in which our country has consistently gone in these last four years? And we see a situation with the Government from my appreciation of these Estimates do not even have confidence in itself [applause] and indeed they will hold on to a two year old election victory to speak to a mandate that has evaporated in the reality of what it is, is our situation in this country. How out of touch are they [applause] well let us look at the Estimates to see?

In 2012 Mr. Speaker, indeed in 2013 the Government intends to raise \$500 let us round it off to say..., well \$508 million, but it will spend by its own Estimate \$622 million, now that is to say it will raise from tax \$508 million, but it also intends to raise from grants, I suppose that would be through the EU from external loans, from local loans, from capital revenue and other receipts \$290 million taking the entire revenue up to \$799 million you know, but I am believe that I am quoting from well the figures, the end figures are still the same even though there are one or two discrepancies in the actual details. But here is a Government confidently saying that it will raise \$113 million from miscellaneous ways, other ways than these that are detailed, but yet it will..., although it will raise \$113 million from other ways, it still needs to borrow \$111 million.

Well if you know you are going to raise \$113 million from these other ways, why are we so heavily borrowing? Because you may guarantee that you may get the loan, but you know that you will not raise \$113 million in other receipts and you may say that we on the Opposition side tend to belabour the other receipts point, but the fact of the matter is this, if there is a hole that cannot be filled in your Recurrent expenditure, what is going to be affected, where are we going to feel the impact? Are we going to feel the impact in Ministries where you demand efficiency, but people might not have paper for either the bathroom or the printer. I mean, what are you demanding of your work force? If in the Estimates you say how you prioritise the spending will not take into account equipping them to be efficient and so in looking at these Estimates, there is a bigger picture to look at, not just the figures, not just the Maths, but how the Maths translate into what happens in governance. And Mr. Speaker, I am of the views that that cannot be ignored.

So we place St. Vincent in a context. St. Vincent is not a law unto itself, St. Vincent is part of the OECS, and St. Vincent is part of CARICOM and what is happening in CARICOM, what is happening at an OECS level? Yes, efforts are being made; I lure the efforts of the OECS to function as one entity. Why? Because if you look at what is happening worldwide individual Governments do not get anywhere quickly or fast or if at all. You have to function and access funding as groups. But here we have and Mr. Speaker, I neglected to mention that I would also be referring to a number of publications that I will of course make available to the House. An address by Prime Minister of St. Lucia Dr. the Honourable Kenny Anthony, in looking and asking the question, where is CARICOM going? We are members of CARICOM, so our Budget cannot be just seen in a vacuum. He says, "We need to reconfigure both our institutions and our thinking" this is on page 6 of his presentation in Barbados on October 31st 2012. "We need to contemplate our economies laterally across sectors perceiving them as engines driven not just by oil or tourism, but by information, innovation, creativity, investment and technology, human development and competitiveness."

So here we have a situation where this Government does not have the money. The Honourable Minister Julian Francis sometimes comes out and says point blank, if I have the money I will do it. So we have a situation where you do not have the money, but what money they do have? This is why Budgets are so important. How are you prioritizing spending what you do have and how are you positioning yourself to do more with less, to become more competitive, more efficient and to use the sectors that you are trying to develop to actually make them work so that you can create the employment in spite of the reality that we face economically, so that you can actually get growth that is not point something of a percent that you hold on to as being the best average in the OECS?

What is the Government doing in this Estimate to say to me that they are thinking about how to get the small things right? Coming into a place such as this and demanding of your Government departments and statutory bodies that they become more efficient, well maybe it may sound good, it may make a good sound bite, but, Mr. Speaker, how is the Government approaching procurement for example, across all of these Ministries where Information Technology is being implemented? How are they looking at using the IT sector to transform our economy to a knowledge base economy which according to Dr. Anthony, he says on page 5 of this address, “None of us would doubt that our traditional economies once led by commodity exports sectors have significantly transformed. None of us would deny that investment, employment and growth in these new service economies are driven primarily by knowledge and education.”

So here is the answer and it is an answer that the Government side of the House knows only too well, we must transform our economy to be a knowledge base economy and all of the efforts in education cannot just happen in a vacuum. So the Government cannot be preoccupied with politicking to secure a second and third term on the basis of politics, it must be preoccupied with ensuring that by how it functions, Mr. Speaker, it merits the support of the voting populist to continue, because they seek tangible results in how the Government governs and we have no tangible results to hold on to. So Mr. Speaker, we look at these Estimates and we worry, because save and except for a few figures here and there, the trend is the same, the trend continues. A deficit and according to the Honourable Prime Minister speaking here today, he says, “running a deficit is not intrinsically wrong, so long as you have a framework of prudence and enterprise,” but I cannot look here and see the prudence and the enterprise. Please correct me if I am wrong. On page 586 I suppose this will be prioritise never to happen, but over \$1 million is anticipated to be spent for a vehicle for the Prime Minister’s Residence, refurbishing the Prime Minister’s Residence and actually refurbishing the Prime Minister’s Residence is anticipated to require \$760,000 and purchasing of vehicle for the Prime Minister’s Residence is expected to require \$96,000 and \$75,000 is suppose to go into furniture and equipment and \$200,000 to improve the security quarters at the Prime Minister’s Residence.

One would hope that these things never get prioritise as being top of any list to do in the next year or two or three or four, because surely, the discomfort that is being felt by the people right now who cannot find a way to spend \$500, \$600, \$700 they cannot find it to put their children to do O’ Levels, how can you..., how am I supposed to accept this? It is just on a paper, it will never happen. [Interjection] so whether that justification? Whether that justifies \$1 million in spending to fix a leaking room...,

HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON: That is real low.

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK: It is in the Estimates and that is what we are discussing [interjection] what are you asking the people to accept because we are resilient. We will band we belly. Let us see how prioritizing happens in the year to come. What in these paper writings in this entire book, this entire 600 and..., well no, my book is not even correctly bound, so I cannot even tell you if that is the last page on it, it is up side down 600 plus page document, Mr. Speaker. What in it says to me and says to the average Vincentian that their lot will improve in 2013?

Yes there are efforts being made in ICT, but without a proper strategic approach to ICT you will never get the returns on your investment that you should get. You will never [applause] we have since 2005 on this side of this House been advocating a move towards a knowledge based economy, where we grow the economy by really revving up that engine which will automatically mean that our young people getting powered and not only employed, but create their own employment. So I see anything here except a piece-meal approach to the problem? For four years talking about voice over IT PBX for Government in the interim, are we looking at becoming more efficient, spending less on travel by using Skype so that our meetings could happen with everybody in their own office? Are we using it to empower police officers to communicate more quickly about what is happening? Is it being used across Ministries? Are we looking at IT as an option to make us more efficient so that there is a savings there that would reflect in these figures here? Unless it can be spoken to us as some grand revolutionary idea, these things are either happening behind closed doors or not happening at all. And I believe the latter and not the former is true.

There is a requirement that our department heads and everybody who is intended to be more efficient in Government, be more educated in what technology is and how it can function and how they can use technology. Is there that mission? And I am not talking about for our young people who are already quite text savvy. I am talking about people like the Commissioner of Police who permits himself to be scammed by the oldest letter in the book circulating online. How is it even possible that an IT forward thinking country such as ours could have as the person most responsible for answer to the leader of our country for issues of national security. Somebody who did not know well when they get this letter just take the first three lines and Google it to see if it is a scam because people who have been victims to these scams actually post them on line so you know. [Interjection] what sad is that, that is not bright, it is actually the normal thing that anybody receiving this email who is accustomed to email will do [interjection] but that is the exact problem, Mr. Speaker, to be happily saying that we as a Government are not able to manipulate the very technology that holds within it our move towards growth.

Mr. Speaker, you are text savvy I dear say. You and I have had the conversations about technology and the benefit about technology and you, Mr. Speaker, I know you do not expect that commendation from me, but it is true [laughter] and you have agonised over the fact that technology cannot be more used in this very context in here [interjection] have you had another? So here we have a situation and forgive me, Mr. Speaker, you see this is not about scoring political points you know, and it is about ringing the alarm that in 2012 what happened in 2011 and 2010 cannot continue. What happened in 2009 cannot continue. So Vincentians are being asked, Mr. Speaker, in looking at these Estimates to accept that some brighter day will come. But the recycling that has taken place with this document leaves us wondering where that brighter day will make itself known, seen, felt and enjoyed. I will like to enjoy a brighter day.

In 2010 the Honourable Prime Minister speaking at our Independence said that from January 2011 and I embrace these issues in the context of, can we continue to have confidence in this Government to mean what it says, to do what it says it would do and repositioned our economy so that we can really grow. The Prime Minister said, the Honourable Prime Minister said, focus developmental policies are to be implemented from January 2011 and please tell me that all of these things have happened and I just missed the bus. An Agricultural diversification programme to uplift farmers finance largely by proceeds from a \$30 million soft loan from the exporting bank of Taiwan that was to happen from January 2011 eh. The implementation of a \$35 million health sector development programme finance by the European Union through the 10th European Development Fund, thirdly [interjection] I said I would be fully happy to accept that all of these things have happened and I just missed it. The implementation of a \$40 million European Union finance project for the development of Post Secondary Education, I see some of that, the implementation of an Integrated Agricultural Development Programme financed by \$37 million from Banana Accompanying Measures financed by the European Union. These things were supposed to create that stimulus that is needed when you are trying to do less with more. When you are trying to cut and contrive catch your hand, sorry more with less [interjection] again, but they were conceived to be implemented in 2011. Here we are now....,

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: If my friend would give way. Mr. Speaker, when you take..., if anyone is sufficiently knowledgeable about these things you take the banana accompanied measures which should have unfolded in 2011, but were held up in Brussels, hostage in the European Parliament, they are now unfolded, secondly the 10th EDF we see the bam inside of these Estimates, we see the European Union 10th EDF in these Estimates and the IT programme is being built out. I do not know when last my Honourable friend went to the Community College for instance to see what is happening to that particular programme there and of course you would notice that there are other dimensions of the Agricultural Diversification Programme and its modernisation inside of the Estimates to. So Mr. Speaker, one of the problems which my Honourable friend should appreciate is that when you are getting these monies on either grants or soft loans, the time when you actually expect them sometimes, there is a later delivery that is all.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay, Honourable Member, you have 15 minutes to conclude your debate.

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICKS: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I spent the majority of my presentation today really placing these Estimates in what I believe to be their proper not just context but using a backdrop of reality that more often times than not the Government wishes us to ignore. So to stand up and say well the challenge, funding being held hostage in Europe that is a reality and that is something that we face, it is important that the people be made to feel by how you govern and not just the supporters of the Government, but all Vincentians [applause] we need to feel that the efforts in Government are to benefit the improvement of the quality of lives of us all.

So perhaps the difficulty with communicating has to do with the communication the fact that the communication is expected to happen across a broken divide of partisan politics because, Mr. Speaker, the reality that Vincentians face is that the money is not turning around in people's pockets, they cannot feel it, they cannot feel the impact of it, employment is almost a none event, underemployment is the order of the day so

that a young lady with eight O' Levels and four A' Levels could catch her hand by cleaning my mother's home two days a week, what a revolution? [Interjection] not enough for her qualifications, she is over qualified for that job, vastly over qualify for that job and so that reality is manifesting itself in what our young people are not only not doing, but what they are forced to do.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: There must some kind of specific reason why somebody with eight O' Levels and four A' Levels are employed in your mother house to do domestic work.

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICKS: To my mother's home. Yes.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Highly specific.

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICKS: Yes, highly, highly specific. It is called your governance [applause] yes, your governance, your governance puts them there. Your governance puts them there, unrealised potential, Mr. Prime Minister. Unrealised potential, Mr. Prime Minister.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: [Inaudible]

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK: Unrealised potential. Better she work by me than by your house. Better she work by my house than by your house. We know what happens at your home.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, wait, wait just a minute.

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICKS: We know what happens at your home.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Members,

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICKS: And not even to the general public. Not even to the general public.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, [shouting] Honourable Member, I am speaking.

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICKS: Very well, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Would you please sit. I do not want this thing to break down in a session cursing out between one and the other person.

MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: [Inaudible]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Listen, Honourable Member, I am not addressing you.

MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: I addressing you?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I addressing you?

MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: I addressing you?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: When I come to address you I will address you. I am not addressing you. Good. I do not want this matter to break down between..., in a curse out between Members. We are...,

MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: [Inaudible]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Senator, if you continue to humbug me I will have to ask you to leave you know. Honourable Member for Central Kingstown, because I am speaking and you are..., I just addressed you, I am not joking with this kind of thing you know. Good, I will ask you to leave. Good. Okay. We need to have some discipline in this Parliament. I mean, I am listening here and let us as adults approach this thing in a proper way. If I am addressing a Member of the Parliament, I as Speaker have a right to address it. When I am addressing any other Member, then I am addressing that Member, if I am not addressing you in a particular way I do not see why you Honourable Member for Central Kingstown need to butt in and this is a thing you do all the time and I am asking you please. [Interjection] no Honourable Member. Honourable Senator sorry, would you continue your debate and let us end this cursing.

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK: Grateful to you, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, so the reality that our young people face is an environment where there is no real job creation to speak about. There is an uninspired private sector that sees itself more as within the cross hairs of the Government for target than an entity with which the Government wants to facilitate its growth or give it any leadership role as pushing the recovery of our economy and Mr. Speaker, I began my presentation this morning by, sorry this afternoon by setting St. Vincent economy in the context of the region's economy as it is expected to interact with the international economy and respond to the international economy or the world economy, let us put it that way.

The problems that we face are not unique to us, but the urgency, the urgent need for response which I am saying is not contemplated in these Estimates...,

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I hope you do better than...,

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK: Again the urgent need for response where something on a paper as a statistic is not resonating and translating for the general public as something that they can tangibly see as a benefit. So hold on to your statistics Government, the reality is that the people are not feeling what 0.05 or 0.01 percent [applause] growth or 0.1 percent growth [applause] or 1 percent growth means.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, may I just if my Honourable friend give way, there is no comment made of 0.1 or 0.01 let us not turn this into an entertainment session 0.4 percent growth which I accept is flat, but let us use the figure and Mr. Speaker, while I am on my feet, before my Honourable friend winds up I would like her to tell the House what happens at the Residence of the Prime

Minister. I would invite her to do that to tell us what happens, because she said that the last time when you stopped her, Mr. Speaker, I would like to know that.

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICKS: Thankfully I have not been one of the women to visit your residence and it will never happen. So I cannot speak with any authority on what happens there now, but what I do recalled...,

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: So therefore, Mr. Speaker, you have no basis on which to say you know what happens at the residence of the Prime Minister.

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICKS: I did not say that.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, just...,

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICKS: Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I actually have one...,

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, please listen to me, just a minute.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: [Inaudible]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, let me make this point clear [interjection] and the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown would not put words in my mouth. Let me make this very clear that we are here to debate the Estimates and let us in our debate all our references and relevancies and so on, let us make them in reference to the debate. [Interjection] well I am not responding to you either. Let us make sure that we keep these..., let us..., there are people listening us. Since you spoke about my being savvy on text...,

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICKS: Technology.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Text, whatever you call it, I have had international response to that you know, so there are people abroad listening to us [laughter] please let us move on.

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICKS: Indeed, Mr. Speaker...,

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: No, let me just address this one because we need to be a little bit serious. There is absolutely nothing wrong per say with cross talk and we get it on both sides of the House and let us not play puritan on this matter, we get it on both sides of the House. There is absolutely nothing wrong with it, but once we keep the cross talk within the context of what we are discussing. Thank you.

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICKS: Yes Mr. Speaker, [interjection] well I only have one..., this is my ending point before I will of course offer general good wishes indeed. Mr. Speaker, the end point which I am not even sure if it makes sense to make it because I think that I have underscored all of the points that I want

to make, because I position St. Vincent's economy in the context of not just what is happening here at home, but what is happening and facing the OECS and CARICOM and I am saying that there is a call regionally not just by persons and leaders of different Houses of Parliament who have the stewardship of Governance for their own countries, but also by development economist and the most recent one being Mr. Adrian Ojay who is a development economist out of St. Lucia.

Now he made a publication that I of course will make available to the House as well call "Why come back the irrelevance of geography" it is a worthwhile comment and again how people are feeling about the region and so I position St. Vincent's economy and I position us quite rightly in the centre of our region and why the conversation cannot just be what is facing us here for the sake of what is facing us here. It is because the situation is also bigger than us and that does not mean that we have an opportunity to obligate responsibility, it means that we have a responsibility to respond even more quickly than Government is currently trying to do and this is why I find that these Estimates are woefully lacking, because I cannot see in them that spark of response that I believe is so required.

So here is what the Development Economist Ojay said, he said, "one of the huge challenges facing Governments" and again he was speaking in reference to St. Lucia, but it is also relevant to St. Vincent, "is creating viable opportunity, new economic space, rather than no wage employment for its own obvious sake." But we have a situation where unemployment is the order of the day. He is saying, ask the average Minister about renewable, emerging technologies, new economic space, alternative agriculture, global trends in education, digital media, and social entrepreneurship or how to energise a shrinking private sector. It is not stupidity; it is just that our systems have not evolved and now require radical reengineering. I do not see from these Estimates any indication that the radical reengineering that is so very much required are needed in St. Vincent [applause] is on the horizon for the near medium nor long distance future. But I am hopeful, Mr. Speaker, that the day will come when we will indeed turn that corner under a different administration led by the New Democratic Party [applause].

Mr. Speaker, I wish to take this opportunity to wish every Member of the House and all those persons listening including those persons who would have indicated to you that they are listening to my text savvy, kudos to you, Mr. Speaker. I wish everyone you know the best holiday season possible and I hope and pray that we see a more prosperous 2013.

And let me end on a samba note to take this opportunity with your leave, Mr. Speaker, to say to the Honourable Minister Julian Francis that I extend my condolences to Simone and to your family's on most recent loss. I will say that on..., Simone and I went university together and on the weekends when I will steal or thief a come home I will be promptly loaded up with macaroni pie and peleau to deliver to her so I know that there are no real words to commiserate at this time. My family and I extend our condolences. I am gratified to you, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Senator, Member for West Kingstown we will take you after the break. But before we suspend there are couple things, let me..., and I am going to use the scripture here and I am going to get it from my phone, "finally brethren whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest,

whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on those things.” I just thought that will end this particular session with. And I will allow the Honourable Member for..., Honourable Senator, Minister of Works to make a statement in relation to his brother’s funeral.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity and I want to on behalf of the family to extend thanks to all those persons who have called and expressed their sorrow and condolences on the passing of Elroy and quite a few Members from the Opposition benches also called and I do appreciate that.

Mr. Speaker, just to let you know that the funeral will be on Thursday at 2 O’ Clock at the St. Joseph’s Catholic Church at Colonarie, same place we had the funeral for Stilly last week and he will be buried at school Hill Cemetery that is the Catholic Cemetery, it is called “Bellevue” but you have to drive through Mount Grenan to get up on the School Hill.

Just for good housekeeping, there was quite..., it was quite chaotic as we all know the main bridge in Colonarie is demolished and there is the bypass at the bridge and with a funeral at that Church, a heavy funeral it creates serious traffic congestion last week at Stilly’s funeral, so I have asked the police for some help. We have arranged for parking at the old Colonarie Police Station yard and Morris Warrican’s yard, it is big, it can hold hundreds of vehicles in both those areas. We will not allow parking from Prime Minister’s mother’s house up to the Church and on the other side we will not allow parking on the new piece of concrete road going back down to Colonarie. Those persons coming from above Byera Hill should park at the School yard above because the yard is very big, those coming from Park Hill and South Rivers we are asking you please to park at Central which is the old central Arrowroot Factory and there is a church yard just below which used to be Vickie Beache’s House. There is adequate parking so we are asking persons please if you are coming from the city to the funeral to park down at the bottom and walk up to the church that will assist us of getting out of there, because these days it gets dark by quarter to six.

So there is ample parking and the police would be there to assist us and we will cone off the area from down by the main highway because that piece of bypass is now the main highway. All manners of vehicles including 20 and 40 foot trailer trucks pass by there.

So on behalf of the family let me extend thank you to everybody and those of you who can make it to the funeral we would appreciate it. Thank you very much.

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

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, I think that Honourable Members are probably aware, but if they are not I would remind them that tomorrow morning at 10 O’ Clock at the Anglican Cathedral is the occasion for the funeral of Sir Cuthbert Woodruff that is what I have been advised [interjection] tomorrow at 10 o’clock, yes. Mr. Speaker, it is now 1:35 perhaps we can take an hour and the 25 minutes and return at 3:00 p. m. [interjection] no, no, no 3 we will return at 3.

Question put and agreed to.
House suspended at 1:37 p. m. (Luncheon)
House resumed at 3:10 p. m.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Pray be seated. Okay I know I have the Honourable Member for West Kingstown [interjection] eh? [Interjection] I do not know about that one [interjection] I ain't know about that one, but before I take the Honourable Member I just want to make a statement.

It has to do with we are still trying to work out the policy in relation to the use of laptops in the Parliament. We have not yet made any decision on that one. I think I might have seen a Member using a laptop and even worse someone..., it has been brought to my attention that someone in the stranger's gallery was also doing similarly. I want to..., until we have fully define that policy, let us please desist from doing so and particularly in the stranger's gallery that is a no, no totally forbidden. All right, Honourable Member, let me just get my timing here correct for you and so that..., all right Honourable Member, when you are ready.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Mr. Speaker, I would want to begin if you will by craving your indulgence with just few minutes to express my sincerest condolences to the Honourable Senator Francis. I do so because, Mr. Speaker, my dear friend Elroy Francis and I go back quite away. We both received CIDA scholarships to go to the University of Guyana in 1975 and indeed we were roommates for those two years. He also was the Godfather for my son who was baptised in Guyana and since then we have maintained a very, very close friendship. I have known him as a very good humankind with a very big heart and his sudden passing was for me a very, very personal loss. So I want to express my own condolences to the Honourable Senator, Elroy's family and all the persons who are directly affected. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I did not time you.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am also grateful for the opportunity to make my presentation to this year's Estimates debate because following this I will crave your indulgence in leaving the Parliament, I have asked you repeatedly, Mr. Speaker, to get more posturepedic chairs to no avail and it is very uncomfortable and from time to time my back continues to give me trouble. So I would crave your indulgence to leave thereafter to go and rest.

I have been given responsibilities, Mr. Speaker, to address a number of areas and I would attempt to cover them during this period. They span from Transport and Works to Housing, Utilities, Ports, Energy and Health and [interjection] ha ha ha ha ha very funny, it is a good thing, Mr. Speaker, I am only shadowing those responsibilities, Mr. Speaker, because some people think they are Hercules.

I wish to begin though, Mr. Speaker, [interjection] not for me, I wish to begin, Mr. Speaker, by addressing some issues globally on the financing of the Budget and Mr. Speaker of the Estimates. I am particularly concern quite apart from the overall continuing deficit on the Recurrent expenditure, but when I look at the table which deals with the summary of capital receipts, Mr. Speaker, and I look in details for the section dealing with grants, because I think in these times one understands the importance of being able to access grant funding which as we

all know has the benefit of not enhancing our debt. But under item 222 external receipts grants that is on Roman numeral VII, it is struggling to note that while the Estimates for 2012 were \$41 million, we see a revised Estimates for 2012 of \$16 million, good Lord that is frightening and we see for this year coming that is the Budget we are debating for 2013, we see an estimated amount for \$40 million and given what happened in 2012 this trend I hope would not be where we have to revise downwards from that because, Mr. Speaker, I believe as a people, we need to pay particular attention to our capacity to make use of those resources.

I recalled the European Development Funds Unit being virtually dismantled when this Government came into being and since then we have seen a constant fall off in our ability to access those very important grant funds. So I would want to urge, Mr. Speaker that we..., one of the things..., and again I am putting this in the global context of the things we need to do as a country and people to enhance the lives of our people, which is what I believe this Budget ought to be about and when there are grant funds available, we must exercise all of the diligence required to make sure that we maximize the benefits to the country and therefore my very serious concern about the reduction, substantial reduction in the Estimated amounts for 2012 and to hope that we will not see that again in this year's Budget.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to refer to the Ministry of Transport and Works on page 409 of the documents, the results indicator and that is what I say Mr. Speaker, I have taken some time to go through this document and I wonder for the life of me whether people are serious about presenting this document late as it has been delivered with so many matters that make you wonder if this is a first trial. It could not be intended for the use of this Parliament as is. There are so many areas in this document Mr. Speaker that make absolutely no sense, even from a cursory analysis of the results indicators on page 412 at the bottom. One of the indicators for 2012 was work with BRAGSA to repair 20,000 feet of asphalt road, 10,000 feet of concrete road, 15,000 feed of feeder road by December 2011. That is an indicator for 2012 and what is interesting a comment, not even a comment on that. Why is this before us? One really has to wonder you know and so on so many sections you have complete design work, engage consultant for construction of the Dark View and Sandy Bay, not a comment, not a comment.

The point is Mr. Speaker, this should not be happening in a document of this importance. There is a reason for putting result indicators. Good Lord we have some weird humans dealing with this. You know and Mr. Speaker, if those were the only instances one can forget, but the document throughout is rampant with this kind of..., you wonder whether this is the people's business being addressed. You really have to wonder.

On page 414 of the same section, Mr. Speaker, and this section now deals..., and I believe you know, Mr. Speaker, that probably explains why for the year 2013 we have dramatically changed our result indicators to some very simple bullets that have no specific achievable objectives, every vague that is not what this exercise is intended to do. It is for the various Ministries, having put forward their Budgetary proposals and having decided what finances are available to plan the course of action and to anticipate what is reasonably to be expected at the end of the financial year. Instead you have a series of very vague and bland..., look at under Project Management on page 414 Mr. Speaker, on the third bullet, pursue the facility to generate revenue from the services of the soils laboratory that Mr. Speaker, clearly is one of the big objectives of the Ministry and Transport and Works, to pursue the facility to general revenue from the services of the soils laboratory, the

Ministry of Transport and Works major objective and below that 4, 5, 6, 7 preparation of a comprehensive technical and financial report on all Government projects and programme under the control of the Ministry.

Am I to take it Mr. Speaker, therefore that in all the years this Ministry has not been doing this work and it is now going to prepare comprehensive, technical and financial report on all the Government Projects and Programmes under the control of the Ministry? Has that never been done before? So that is an indicator that you want to have that achieve now. I do not know if you were running a mauby shop and you are preparing a Budget for that and it is done in this fashion that mauby shop would not be in existence for long. This exercise, Mr. Speaker, leaves so much, so much to be desired.

Mr. Speaker, I wish very quickly to turn to results indicator under the Ministry of National Security, Air and Sea Ports particularly on page 287 and I would deal in detail with this in the other aspect of the work, Mr. Speaker, God willing, but this one at the top of the page, collaborating with international partners OAS to develop legislation for geothermal and other sources of renewable energy and on the other side of that it says, a draft geothermal bill is presently under discussion.

Mr. Speaker, we have been hearing about geothermal and other alternative forms of renewable energies for a decade plus and today one of our results indicator is that we will get the legislation for it, good heavens. I do not know that we have been demonstrating the will to govern in this land when we produce this kind of a document. Still on results indicator, Mr. Speaker, I wish to turn my attention to the Ministry of Health, wellness or lack thereof and the Environment and I begin on the first page on the matter relating to operationalising of the oxygen plants, because I have been through the document, I have seen what indicators were for 2012, I have looked at the comments for 2012 and I look at what proposed to happen and I am asking, what is the Government position on this oxygen plant? Is the Government pursuing it, is the private sector pursuing it?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Give me the pages.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Page 429 Mr. Speaker, Ministry of Health, because it says this was not done owing to the unsuitability of the proposed site, but there is a completely different thing when it comes to the result indicator for 2013 Mr. Speaker. I do not believe anybody is reading these documents seriously you [know].

I turn to page 430 Mr. Speaker, it has not been long ago when I brought to the attention in this Honourable House the fact that we have not been paying to procure drugs for the hospital and there has been a great sound and dance by this Government as to what it is doing, the reason why, how we are wasting the stuff, we need to control this and control that, so I was elated when last year I saw under the Central Medical Stores the objective to improve inventory management as it relates to the Central Medical Stores, but look on the right hand side of that, Mr. Speaker, no action was taken for a whole year on something as critical as..., we heard all how the things being used wrongly, and all kind of things. You have got such a critical tool to help you manage this thing and you come back and tell me now, no action taken.

Page 431; reduce the hours in wait at the Accident and Emergency by 50 percent. I did not set that criterion, I did not set it. Measures were implemented, but figures on reduction are not available. Well I can give figures, Mr. Speaker, ask any John Public how long they have to wait at the Accident and Emergency. It certainly has not improved, it certainly has not improved you know and you know, Mr. Speaker, if, if, if, if, when you are dealing with Accident and Emergency and you set these highfalutin objectives you know, to say you are going to reduce it by 50 percent is in itself an admission that things are grossly wrong that in itself. If you feel the need to reduce it by 50 percent that in itself speaks of a crisis situation, but you cannot even determine what has happened.

On the same page, Mr. Speaker, towards the middle, drainage repair works at the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital to be completed again by the third quarter by quarter four of 2011, this is an indicator for 2012 the repair work was not done. Mr. Speaker, all of us know what happens when you have torrential rains in the basin that drains into that part of town. We get flooding, we get flooding [crosstalk] you see, Mr. Speaker, some people seem to like history, especially ancient history and although we have had 12 years in Government, Mr. Speaker, 12 years in Government all the Members on the other side can refer too is what happened when there was a real Government in the form of the NDP [applause] that is all they can refer to. The 17 years of real governance in this country under the New Democratic Party that is all they can talk about.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, if the Honourable Member would give way.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: I will give way to you any day.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Thank you, thank you, please you were very kind to me. Mr. Speaker, there was a serious error made when the new wing at the hospital was built. The major drain which takes the runoff from Montrose...

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: we heard that already you know.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: There is one outlet at the Nurses Hostel.

HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER: Who raised it? You raised it.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: After that everything else comes down because the one that goes through the cemetery was also blocked, so everything comes down there and the problem is the pillars that hold the floor for that new wing where the lab is sit inside of the drain, Mr. Speaker. So that is what caused the problem, to get it corrected you have to break up the floor of the hospital lab and that came under a perfect NDP Government [crosstalk].

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the Honourable Member is not an engineer, because clearly there are alternative solutions which should have been done within the last 12 years. There are several other alternatives available [crosstalk].

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Striking of the gavel.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: And the Ministry has before it Mr. Speaker, proposals for alternatives solutions, they can dance on the head of a pin. They give us the same Recurrent theme 17 years, 17 years of good governance you know, you know, you know [crosstalk] you know, Mr. Speaker, when I hear these discussions you know I am always reminded of a comment made by the former Prime Minister, Sir James about when you drive a vehicle in the country and the dogs are barking after the vehicle, I am hearing it every day [interjection] I am hearing it every day, Mr. Speaker, this kind of comments reminds me of that. You have 12 years to correct these things and you are still going back, man.

Mr. Speaker, I will not be deterred you know. I know the truth is very painful thing [crosstalk] and I want, Mr. Speaker, to simply point out to the Honourable Minister of Health and I say this unlike how other people use it Mr. Speaker, I say this of my friend the Honourable Minister of Health. I would really want him to pay close attention if he has not yet to page 448, item number 350 at the very end of that Mr. Speaker and this refers to supplies of materials medical stores. Mr. Speaker, the actual expenditure according to this document under this item in 2011 was almost \$8 million, \$7.978 million for the last column. The revised Estimates is the same as it was at the beginning \$6½ million in 2012.

Mr. Speaker, given all of the complaints with respect to the operations of the hospital and the various clinics the Estimate for 2013 for the supplies and materials for the medical stores, given the fact that there has been no inventory control done, given the fact that things are getting worse is gone down, Mr. Speaker, to \$5.8 million. I rest my case, I rest my case.

Mr. Speaker, again I do not know at page 470 again Ministry of Health under nutrition support programme, Mr. Speaker, this is something that for me is a very serious matter because we are talking about wellness and all of that eh and if I may I will deal with this under the Budget in another way. But I simply want to get to point out to the Honourable Minister that as small as this amount is a half of million dollars, it has been cut, it dropped from what it was in 2011; \$560,000 the revised Estimates is about the same thing \$568,000 but you are seeing it down to \$511,000.

Yes Mr. Speaker, these at a time when you are dealing..., everyone would say the figure is small. Well I deliberately choose to dwell on this kind of subject, Mr. Speaker, because we need to put this into the context of the impoverishment of our people and how critically therefore these kinds of programmes are to health and wellness. Mr. Speaker, as a people, as a Ministry of Health, I believe that time has long come when we should have been carrying on the work of the previous Government with respect to dealing with health at its source, seriously consider helping people to improve their nutrition, helping people to change their lifestyles and so reducing..., I will not have a problem with a regular gradual reduction which is what we should be [interjection] this is what we should be aiming at, a gradual reduction in the Bill for drugs. But you can only do that, you can only do that when you help people to help themselves, encourage them to eat properly and to do the necessary checks and exercises, encourage early detection in the primary and even in Infant Schools so that you can spot potential problems and deal with it, deal with it [interjection] instead you seeing the figures not improving at all, not at all, not approving [interjection] are you the Minister of Health. Mr. Speaker, we have two Ministers of

Health? [crosstalk] I am addressing my friend [laughter] you were removed as Minister of Health, you are no longer there, be quite [interjection] yes you created the problems, yes you left it for him [crosstalk] you left it for him.

Mr. Speaker, yes oftentimes I have heard it said you know you do not put the person trained in the area to work in their field you know, you do not do that and I [laughter] Mr. Speaker, when the NDP forms Government I promised this much, I do not care what my Prime Minister would say, I would not be involved in the Water and Sewerage Authority [crosstalk] I would not you know, because I have seen it without..., on a serious note, Mr. Speaker, we tend to get tunnel visions and often times it requires someone who is not directly involved [interjection] that is why we need to have someone who is not directly involved. They often make better [crosstalk] get better results. So it is good for the country that the Honourable Dr. Slater, who is also my friend, Mr. Speaker, is no longer Minister of Health, because he did not do a good job [laughter] and he ran before he was rejected at the polls.

But Mr. Speaker, but he knows that, he knows that, he knows that very well, we deal with the facts. Mr. Speaker, I just want to spend some time dealing with the Ministry of Works and I am glad the Minister of Transport and Works is here because, Mr. Speaker, on page 608 of the capital estimates dealing with the Ministry of Transport, Works, Urban Development and Local Government, I listened to my colleague, the Honourable Representative for South Leeward speaking about the hope that you would get some roads done in his constituency, Mr. Speaker, I just want to take some time out of a total of \$32 million on page 610 the total approved expenditure for Ministry of Transport and Works, out of a total of \$32 million, Mr. Speaker, compared to the approved expenditure in 2012 of \$43 million. So we have a substantial reduction 11 out of 32 Mr. Speaker, that is almost 33 percent reduction in the capital estimates for a major..., the Ministry of Works, Mr. Speaker, should have responsibility for a lot of construction work, because we all know that these projects have a lot to do with our people's ability to survive.

But I want to go through, Mr. Speaker, I want to go through these projects to show how this document is nothing but a big joke, because in reality the Minister has little over \$10 million here in projects to be executed although it says \$32 million and I will show why. Look at item at the bottom of page 608; 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 leave out the Kamakary [interjection] my word man, Kamakary. I tired seeing this Kama Cabou thing here so I call it a Kamakary project. I am tired seeing this Kama Cabou thing here so I call it Kamerkary, but look at the others surrounding it Mr. Speaker, the one to do with the public library, the one to do with the Windward Highway, Windward Highway, Windward Highway \$3 million, \$2 million, \$1.5 million, \$460..., no money you did go under construction you know, Mr. Speaker, these are projects completed, these are retention monies simply to be paid out. So right away you discount all of that. There is no work to be done there, no work there. But it look good thirty something, watch million of dollars, nobody ain't getting no work out of that that project done uh. My God, this thing is a joke but it ain't stop there uh.

Mr. Speaker, there is one that really makes me heart.., and it is a good thing I do not get palpitation of the heart you know. Item number 550802, rehabilitation of roads and you know and when you go across, Mr. Speaker, it says to rehabilitate roads including Brighton Salt Pond Roads, Sayers Road, Marriaqua Bus Layby Road, and

Montreal Gardens Road, how much you think they assigned this year, Mr. Speaker? A big fat zero, zero and if you think that bad, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, [interjection] I am sorry Mr. Speaker, there is a 10; there is a 10.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Thank you.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: There is a 10 [interjection] thank you sir, Jesus Mr. Speaker, I, I, I, I, I, I, Mr. Speaker, the zeros follow for the years after. So you ain't getting more than \$10 to do that this year and next year you are getting zero, the year after that zero and if you think it is a joke in 2012 they had approved \$10 and what we got was zero so you know this year..., when I say it was zero, Mr. Speaker, I was being real.

MAJOR THE HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: You get minus zero.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: There was zero, so no money and you know Mr. Speaker, we have been asking on this side a number of questions relating to roads and I remember for a mere \$30,000 the Honourable Minister of Works my dear friend said to me all I needed to do was to get the Prime Minister to give him \$30,000 and we will link Edinboro and New Montrose that if there is an emergency we can come out from there, \$30,000. Now if you could not get it in 2012, Mr. Speaker, when I look in 2013 I want to know..., Doc, Doc, Doctor Friday do not take basket to carry water. When the Minister tells you, you are going to get something this year...,

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member...,

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: My apologies, Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the correction, my apologies. When the Honourable Minister gives you a guarantee that you could get a piece of road here...,

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Or the stadium.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Anything, Mr. Speaker, you know I might sound jovial, but if I do not I will cry [laughter] that this document, this document is sad, it really is. You could not believe that in the year of our Lord 2013 an important Ministry as the Ministry of Works is so devoid of resources to undertake the very basic reasons for which it was established.

And Mr. Speaker, I am hearing the Minister say to me, you may not hear it, but I am hearing it Mr. Speaker, he is saying BRAGSA will do some of the work, but Mr. Speaker, when you turn to what they are giving to BRAGSA it is even worse BRAGSA getting less this year coming and this year BRAGSA could not do anything. Where are we going to be able to execute road works in this country? I am continuing you know. The Customs Building construction \$300..., the Customs Building practically done after how many years sir, twenty something [laughter] you know reconstruction of the Customs Building, so no money ain't going to spend on that, that project basically done you know.

Mr. Speaker, but there is one project I want us to pay particular attention to and if anything represents the Budgetary Estimates for 2013, it is this one. In the constituency of the Leader of Government business there is a road to be built, it cost \$50,000 item number 551301 rehabilitation of Congo Valley Road \$50,000. Mr. Speaker, when Government takes a \$50,000 project and splits it up into three years, I ain't joking you know, it says into 2013; \$100,000 it is sorry, \$100,000 my apologies, \$50,000 in this year that is 2013; \$40,000 in 2014; and \$10,000 in 2015; \$100,000 project have to be spread over three years, I ain't say \$1 million Mr. Speaker, I ain't say a \$½ million Mr. Speaker, I say \$100,000 road has to be split in three years in the Prime Minister's constituency. Something gone wrong, [interjection] no, no, Government ain't broke that is not the word.

Mr. Speaker, I hope for God's sake before this exercise is done somebody would tell me this is an error and it would be taken out because if the international community sees this, they will call us a failed state, eh \$100,000 you cannot do in 3 years from revenue you know, from revenue source in the Prime Minister's constituency. So I am asking, is this a real..., was this document a first draft that somebody forget and presented to us?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: 10 minutes, Honourable Member.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: You are kidding me, Mr. Speaker, or you serious [laughter]. Mr. Speaker, rehabilitation...,

HONOURABLE SABOTO CAESAR: If my Honourable friend...,

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: No, no, no.

HONOURABLE SABOTO CAESAR: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a Point of Order 35(2) just basically to explain a bit further, Mr. Speaker, on the point raised with the Congo Valley Road because I am fully aware and apprised of the facts that that road would be addressed under the banana accompanying measures.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I am guided. Honourable Member, speak.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Mr. Speaker, you know sometimes silence is golden, because banana nah have no money [laughter].

HONOURABLE SABOTO CAESAR: Mr. Speaker, no, no, I really cannot allow especially for the listening public...,

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I think the comment is really out of order.

HONOURABLE SABOTO CAESAR: Yes, yes but if I...,

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Because I know of the banana accompanying measures.

HONOURABLE SABOTO CAESAR: Yes because I will just want to explain that when the Honourable Member noted that banana does not have any money as referring to the BAM it is basically the grant that we are going to get from the European Union. So I just want for the listening public to be clear on the facts.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much. That is why I say I ruled it out of order.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Mr. Speaker..., because evidence has shown that we are unable...,

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Just a minute, just a minute, I also have a Member...,

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order that the Honourable Member is misreading the Estimates and misleading this House and the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The same page to which he refers 608 he is referring to the Congo Valley rehabilitation of the Congo Valley Road and he lamented a \$50,000 this year, \$40,000 next year and \$10,000 the next year and how international agencies would be scared and wonder if this is a failed state.

Mr. Speaker, hear what the remark says, counterpart contribution for rehabilitation of Congo Valley Road, turn the other page, Mr. Speaker, to page 610 you would see under 551301 which is the same project number as on page 608 the Honourable Member is not reading his Estimates or he cannot read them. If he wants me to interpret the Estimates for him, I can. Hear what it says, rehabilitation of Congo Valley Road 2013 \$950,000 expenditure 2014 \$3,350,000; 2015 \$600,000 in the extension for rehabilitation of Congo Valley Road. So basically, Mr. Speaker, what this is \$50,000 is local counterpart money, so this year is \$1 million, \$950,000 plus \$50,000 next year is \$3.35 million plus \$40,000 local, the Honourable Member is misleading this House Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay, thank you, Honourable Member.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Mr. Speaker, I totally concur and I apologise to the House. It is my error.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: And I thank the Honourable Member for pointing it out. Thank you. [Interjection] no you did not see it [laughter] you did not see it, thank you [interjection] no somebody pointed it to you to I know that, that is all right [laughter]. Mr. Speaker, my time please.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: You have 9 more minutes.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. speaker, the same thing continues with respect to these projects on the other side and as you go along, Mr. Speaker, even projects that are already completed continue to show up and the point I am making is that really, really what is before the Ministry of Works is a very, very tiny component of what is there on paper in terms of executable projects that would be

brought to bear in the year. Even when there are real projects, Mr. Speaker, the evidence shows that this Government has a process of introducing a project over a period of 5, 6, years and it is within the third and fourth year that you start seeing some action, because of limited fund. So indeed the component of the \$32 million to be executed in 2013 is miniscule and it is a worrying trend because this is one component that can certainly..., the construction industry can certainly help our crippled economy.

Mr. Speaker, with the time left you know, I would want to deal with a few matters relating to my own constituency and the people of West Kingstown. Mr. Speaker and I want to deal with a matter that is very personal. Mr. Speaker, as a representative of the people in West Kingstown, the Government does not have any constituency fund that would allow me to in any way help my constituents. As a people we get together and raise funds on our own. As a representative I am entitled to like all representatives \$1,500 a month. I run a learning resource centre which is indeed intended to demonstrate to this Government what a learning resource centre should look like with five computer terminals with three internet accesses to all members of the public. We do adult education programmes in English Language and Mathematics free of cost to the public at CXC Levels. We do for primary school children, common entrance level free classes in English Language and Maths. We do for Junior Secondary School children in English Language and Maths forms 1 and 2.

Mr. Speaker, during the course of this week I got a call from my office to say that VINLEC disconnected the power supply to the Learning Resource Centre for the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines located in West Kingstown and I called the manager of the VINLEC, Mr. Speaker, I too was a manager for utility in this county, the accounts have my name on it so that there is no excuse that they did know, it is on written policy that as a minimum if the account is in arrears you would call and so advised and he did in fact acknowledge that, but I draw this to the attention of the public, Mr. Speaker, because it is very distressing with the limited resources I have available to me and I must say..., I have no quarrel in saying this you know, Mr. Speaker, I am very open, were it not for my dear wife who is working in Trinidad I could not buy a butter bread, because wherever limited resources I get from the state and whatever it comes from, all of it goes, every cent of it goes to running that office and for helping the indigent people in West Kingstown.

But Mr. Speaker, I am saying this because there is a young lady with minimum legal experience who has a contract in one of the Ministries, who is going through West Kingstown and telling the people in West Kingstown that on a monthly basis I receive \$15,000 from the Government for the people of West Kingstown, somebody who is trained in the law, clearly intended, clearly intended, Mr. Speaker, to malign me. But what I do Mr. Speaker, I really do not want to have to get into this kind of discussion, but I think the public needs to be aware that people must separate out from politics the nastiness that exercise that we do is sustained but by the will of God and the people of this country and some good friends.

Mr. Speaker, on a more positive note, on Monday of next week God willing a very dear friend of mine, a very petite lady will celebrate by the help of God her 100th birthday. Mother Pitt, Advira Pitt is a lady who is absolutely amazing. I have the permission of the Governor General to say that he will visit her God's willing on Monday, I took the time to visit him and although the hill is very steep, Mr. Speaker, if you ever been to Upper New Montrose it is not easy and I want to advice the former Minister of Health if he can join us just in

case some of us cannot make it up the hill. Mr. Speaker, I literally run up there regularly [interjection] [laughter].

Mr. Speaker, again I want to say to the people of this country when we come to you on our Annual Fair, Mr. Speaker, it is that kind of resource that help us to do things. We are pleased for example to be able to change the roof on Mother Pitt's house for her, because it was really badly leaking and with all the disaster money in Hurricane Tomas and all of that a 99 year old lady could not get any assistance in getting that house roof changed. We were able, we were able, Mr. Speaker, to use our limited resources to change the roof of that house for that lady and she is all smiles. But I know, I know those who did not help her will go up there on Monday God's willing and they will have a big sound and dance. But that is all right, we are all Vincentians.

Mr. Speaker, this weekend, again the people of West Kingstown are going to go to Edinboro, there is a drain there, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker the hole is deep and wide, the water has undermined the drain so much so that it undermined a house of an elderly lady and the water springs up in her living room, again, Mr. Speaker, we have been able to get some Rabacca and a sling of cement and the people of West Kingstown are going to go into Edinboro this weekend, Mr. Speaker, to give voluntary of their services to help those people this Christmas not to be looking out for the rains and water springing up in their living room [applause]. Similarly in Montrose, Mr. Speaker, another elderly lady who falls down every time going in her yard to wash her clothes, the whole step and everything deteriorated. We by the grace of God are going to help that lady and other places.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying all of this to say that at this time of the year when things are so bad, when the Ministry of Works offers this as a Budget without hope for the people, the people of West Kingstown at least could know that their representative with the assistance of the people of West Kingstown and friends around the country will be reaching out in a small way to help a number of persons have a Merry Christmas.

So to you, Mr. Speaker, all the Members of this Honourable House including you Madam Clerk and your staff, notwithstanding the fierce criticism of this morning. I am sure there is a legitimate excuse why that was not done. I want to extend to all of us, a wish, Mr. Speaker, that during this Christmas Season, we would recognise that in reality we are despite our misfortunes much better off than the vast majority of the people of this country and we will open our hearts to the spirit of sharing beginning in our own families and in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I wish most especially to greet my Leader, the Honourable Arnhim Eustace and to say to him that we are praying for him, we understand the difficult he has faced consequent upon the very poor management of the health care that he received and we hope [crosstalk] [laughter] you see he is a very Christian man, but Mr. Speaker, I simply want to say to him that all of us wish him a speedy recovery including those on the other side, Mr. Speaker, I know that and so I wish to thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Any further debate? Honourable senator Lewis, I guess this is your first Budget so therefore you..., I wish to remind you that you only have 45 minutes in which to... [Interjection] [Laughter] all right, all the best to you. Rest the back well. As soon as you are ready. Honourable Member, go ahead.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: Yes Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: All right I see you are looking at your watch, you are starting at 4:03 p. m. you have 45 minutes so you can check your time, all right.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to make my contribution to the debate on the Estimates for 2013. Mr. Speaker, before I go into the actual figures, I wish to remind myself that the Estimates really is a statistical representation of the Budgetary proposals, the Government's obligation to the people for the year 2013. It, therefore, Mr. Speaker, provides guidance on what the Government intends to spend and to receive, so; therefore, Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a benchmark by which we intend in St. Vincent to measure the performance of the Government.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, because of that it has retrospective and prospective essence. What I mean by that, Mr. Speaker is that in the Estimates we can look back at the Estimates in the past, we can also look at the actual figures for certain expenditure and also revenue. So that will provide for us the basis on which we plan for the future. We look at the Estimates of the past and we look at the actual for the past whether that which we spent or that which we received and determined as a result of that what we should provide for in the future. So prospective in this case, Mr. Speaker, is first to how we look at the future and how we look at the future depends on what happens in the past and also how we see the prevailing economic conditions at this time.

Mr. Speaker, most importantly however, the Estimates serve as a motivational tool. Even though we have not heard as yet the policies surrounding the figures inside the Estimates what we do have is statistical representation of the Government's contribution or proposed contribution to the economy of St. Vincent in the year 2013. On understanding, Mr. Speaker, how these small countries function, we know that because of our small size, our small numbers in so far as marketing is concerned, our small size geographically and our lack of natural resources that Governments in countries like ours would spend extensively in an attempt to try and boost the economy and create the enabling environment within which the private sector can function. It is against that backdrop, Mr. Speaker, that I suppose that the public servants, members of the public, investors, and prospective investors can either gain confidence from this document or can actually engender some level of concern with respect to the future and the certainty or uncertainty.

So Mr. Speaker, when we think about the Estimates, we have to think that it actually informs Government expenditures and also what it does to us is that in the Opposition we are in a very good position to determine how well the Government is doing because we have a means by which we can actually measure the performance. Mr. Speaker, with those opening remarks, I shall move to the Estimates themselves.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: His opening remark was that the Estimates do not contain the policy.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: I never said so. I never said so.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: As to how these figures were arrived.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: I never said so, and I would never say so. What I said, Mr. Speaker is that with the Budget presentation we would see more of the policies [interjection] so I never said so, he misunderstood it, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, I did not misunderstand him because I immediately, Mr. Speaker, went to Roman numerals XVII. He said that the figures in these Estimates are to present the Budget but until we know the policy of the formation of these figures.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: I never said that. [Interjection]

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: I believe that is the exact ...you can call for the thing, Mr. Speaker. The Honourable Member has a habit, Mr. Speaker, of saying something and if somebody calls, and it happens on the radio shows all the time, he would immediately say "I never said that".

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: Mr. Speaker, I am dealing with

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Do I have the floor?

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, Rule 35. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman Senator Francis is going to respond to what I am saying here, he should respond to what I am saying and not bringing externalities and extrinsic issues in the House here.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: The first thing that comes to my mind when you made that statement is that you are waiting more or less on the Budget.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: That is the point. That is the point.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: But you did use those words; you did use those words.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: That is what I said, Mr. Speaker, absolutely correct, Mr. Speaker, that is what I said, anyway, let us move on, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Let us move on.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: I do not think I would say and mean that [interjection] Mr. Speaker

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: I still maintain the point of order, Mr. Speaker.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: State exactly what point of order.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: I will call for the Hansard Mr. Speaker at a subsequent meeting.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: Good, okay, yes, fair enough, fair enough

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: We will call for the Hansard, Mr. Speaker, is that allowed?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: But I do not know when we would get this done. I was saying those are the words.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: But Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, if I were to get myself involved in trivialities I would go to the entire Estimates and point out all the spelling errors, the errors with respect to arithmetic and so on but they are trivialities. Let us move on, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I am ruling that those were the words that he said only that [inaudible]

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: Let us move on.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I am ruling that those are the words that he said.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: What about the others?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay, Senator just a minute, I am making an announcement. I am saying, I am ruling those were the words I heard him said and immediately my mind ran to the Budgetary proposals. So those are the words he said, I do not think I need to get the Hansard to verify what I heard.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, I will deal with it at a different forum.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay. Okay Honourable Member could you continue.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: Mr. Speaker, in essence if the Honourable Member Senator Francis wants clarification [interjection] Mr. Speaker, these are the bare bones of what you would call the Budgetary exercise and they will be substantiated by policies specifically with respect to the revenue side, those would come during the Budgetary presentation by the Prime Minister. And it is to that I alluded, Mr. Speaker, when I said I will await further information less I get myself involved in a Budgetary presentation as opposed to the debate of the Estimates.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to go first to the summary: Financial Summary of the 2013 Budget Estimates. What we noticed, Mr. Speaker, is that just by looking at the summary this does not inspire hope in the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines. In 2012 Mr. Speaker, the total Budget was \$793,911.000, in 2013 Estimates \$799,122.000 just about .638 percent increase: so it is not much different from the last year. But what is interesting, Mr. Speaker is the fact that we have been experiencing for the past eight years or so a Budget deficit being presented in this House of Parliament. Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that the government's attempt is to pursue what you call an expansionary Budgetary policy and that is the intent to spend more than it can receive in revenues. That Mr. Speaker, can either happen by increasing taxes or by ensuring that you can acquire loans

to spend the difference. In this case the difference is a \$112 million in deficit. [Interjection] The Honourable Prime Minister, I will come to that.

The Honourable Prime indicates that the deficit is \$25 million, now I take a different view to the Honourable Prime Minister and why? The deficit of \$112 million arises under the Current Account and if the Honourable Prime Minister attempted to remove from the calculation Amortization of \$82.8 million and Sinking Fund contribution of \$5.5 million but, Mr. Speaker, that cannot be correct because, Mr. Speaker, that is what is required to service the debt and also on the basis of what is in the Budget those monies are supposed to be collected from Current Revenues not Capital Revenues but Current Revenues and that is why it found itself under expenses in Current Account. And therefore if it is treated as an expense in the Current Account from which it is supposed to be paid for by Current Revenues then the deficit that arises under that account is a Current Account deficit of a \$112 million and not \$25 million. [Interjection]

Mr. Speaker, but Mr. Speaker [laughs] my first time here, it is my first time here

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: I know.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: [interjection] my explanation is correct, explanation. Now, Mr. Speaker what is rather also very interesting about it is the fact that, Mr. Speaker, we now have a situation in which about 88 percent of the revenues that we collect: 88 percent of our expenses for wages and salaries, pension, NIS and servicing the debt can be attributed to those expenses. Eighty eight percent of the revenue that we collect can be attributed to wages and salaries, pension and NIS and the amount of money we have to service the debt thus leaving 12 percent, Mr. Speaker, of the monies that we collect in the current revenue to go towards Goods and Services and Other Transfers and we noticed that Goods and Services represent 13.9 percent of the Current Revenue and Other Transfers represent 19.9 percent of Current Revenues.

You see, Mr. Speaker, the point I am making is this is after you paid wages and salaries, pensions and NIS and you have service the debt which is 27.1 percent of the monies that you collect in the Current Revenues after you have service those you would have taken up 88 percent of the \$508 million that you have collected. Yet, you need with 12 percent leaving, you need 13.9 percent for Goods and Services and also you would need 19.9 percent for Other Transfers. So, you see Mr. Speaker, why it is so important that the Government stops and thinks about the manner in which it prepares its Budget because it must reflect the prevailing economic conditions, it must also reflect historical experience and it must also possess an appreciation of what will happen in the future. We do not see these factors being applied here, because I looked at the Estimates debate and the Estimates itself and I like to refer to the word trust, trust [interjection] it must be ... I will come to that. It must be timely ... well if you want me to go over on the Government side you just [inaudible] away my seat and let us see what happens.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Come over.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: No, I would never do that. It must be timely; [interjection] it must be timely, the figures must be reliable, people must understand them, they must be simple and transparent

that is TRUST and I will go through them some time later in my presentation. So, Mr. Speaker, what we see here does not at all reflect the true situation and I will go through it in great detail. Mr. Speaker, if every year the Leader of the Opposition and I hope he is doing very well I know he is listening, and I hope he is not suffering too much pain at this time. But every year the Leader of the Opposition and other Members of this House; this side of the House lamented the fact that the Government has been putting in a balancing figure of Other Receipts on the Capital side of the Estimates, Capital Revenue, and Capital Receipts side of the Estimates. In this case it is a \$112 million, Mr. Speaker.

Now, it is a balancing figure indeed because it is usually equivalent to the Current Account Deficit which is rather interesting. Over the year, last year it was \$99 million equivalent to the Current Account Deficit, this year it is \$112 million equivalent to the Current Account Deficit. Mr. Speaker, it is definitely a balancing figure and I do not even want to go through, Mr. Speaker, the other issues that my Honourable Friends on this side of the House mentioned earlier on that we have never, never ever collected anyway close to \$20 million in any one year yet we provided for \$113 million; that does not reflect the historical perspectives neither does it reflect the current prevailing economic conditions, and he certainly would not give us an understanding and an appreciation of what we should provide in the future. It does not at all in any way to my mind reflect a proper Budgetary exercise in this country.

And Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that it is a balancing figure you know, and I will tell you why it is obvious because, Mr. Speaker, if you take away, if you take away from the Capital Receipts just take away that \$112 million, Mr. Speaker, you will end up with about \$178 million in Capital Receipts. If you take away the \$112 million you will end up with \$178 million on a Capital Receipt and that is almost equivalent to your Capital Expenditure of \$177 million, and that is how it has been going year after year. So you do not even need to put it there, but, Mr. Speaker, you know why it is there the only way you can balance back the \$799 million is that you have to put it there.

You do not need it; you do not need it for your Capital Expenditure side of the Budget which is a \$177million. If they remove the \$112 million you still have \$178 million which is almost equivalent to what you propose to spend on the Capital side. It happened last year and the year before so you do not need it; but why is it there? It is only there to balance out; if you do not have it there you cannot balance out back at \$799 million on the Revenue side and on the Expenditure side. So it is a balancing exercise, Mr. Speaker and I think that it is something that we need to look at and look at very carefully in future when we prepare our Budget so that we do not make that very obvious, well, I do not want to say mistake but deliberate intervention in the Budgetary exercise in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I heard my Honourable Friends in their presentations mention the issue that the Government may well be involved in what we would call austerity measures. And when one is involved in austerity measures, Mr. Speaker, one can contract; one ought to pursue a contractionary budgetary policy, which means one ought not to appear to be extending oneself in the expenditure side of the Budget. One should try ones best if you are going to increase expenditure then you know you have to make sure you get that amount of money available to you. You will have to increase your loans or you would have to increase your taxes. If you are not increasing your taxes then you have to increase your loans. And to pursue an expansionary budgetary policy for eight

consecutive years you ask yourself the question where and when would it end? Because I tell you once you start that, Mr. Speaker, and you are very boastful about it any other attempt to reduce your total Budget below what it was in the previous year will be an admission, a demonstration, an acclamation and an appreciation of failing.

And Mr. Speaker, I think they do not want, the Government does not want to make their failure very obvious and so they continue this expansionary budgetary policy where would it end? If you ought to spend as you say you will extend yourself to the tune of \$622 million but you are only going to received \$508 million, Mr. Speaker, where are you going to get that \$112 million? Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate the importance of treasury bills, treasury bills are important if you have indeed as the Prime Minister unfortunately and inaccurately indicated that the deficit is \$25 million but when you have a deficit of \$112 million, Mr. Speaker, then you have some problems. Treasury bills rollover every 91 days, so you essentially would take what you receive to pay that which you owe, rolling over so what is left is not much for you to fill that gap and you know you cannot fill that gap because, Mr. Speaker, the evidence has shown that the Government has been involved in austerity measures.

The evidence, Mr. Speaker, has shown that the Government has been involved in austerity measures even though they do not say, so the whole expansionary Budgetary exercise is a farce, it is not a reflection of the real situation that has been happening on the ground here in St Vincent and the Grenadines [knocking the desk] And Mr. Speaker, I would say to you [interjection] Mr. Speaker, that it is obvious, Mr. Speaker, because what we have noticed [interjection] Mr. Speaker, is that except over the past five years for 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 over the past five years only once in that five years the Government has spent more than it Budgeted for in the Current Account. Once, and that was in 2011 when the Government Budgeted to spend \$610 million and the Government spent \$615 million. Before that in 2007 the Government Budgeted to spend in its Current Account \$451 million but it only spent \$436.1 million. In 2008 Mr. Speaker, the Government Budgeted to spend \$517.6 million it only spent \$488 million, in 2009 the Government Budgeted to spend \$553 million they spent \$541. So you have \$14 million in 2007 less than what they Budgeted for, \$28 million in 2008 less than what they Budgeted for, \$12,509,000

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if my Honourable Friend would give way.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: On what?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Would you give way?

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: On what rule may I ask?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I am just asking if you give way if you sit, I mean it is not, I was not rising on a point of order. Mr. Speaker, what is surprising to me about this when I asked him what is the point, my Honourable Friend would know this as an accountant and someone who has been engaged in Budgets, when you do a Budget what you seek to do always is to see if there is a margin between three to five percent on the actual Budget which you can save in the operation of the Budget.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: I know that.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I hear you saying you know that but if you know that why are you making it appear as though it is a matter of a mathematical exercise?

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: Well, Mr. Speaker, next time the Honourable Member on the other side I would request that you ask for a point of order because you are trying to go before me. I am very systematic in my presentation and I would get to where you are or where you were just a while ago. [Interjections] Now, it is okay. Now, Mr. Speaker, I would go back to what I was saying. In 2010 I am saying that you budgeted to spend \$610 million but you spend \$600 million which is \$9 million less. Essentially what I am saying to you, Mr. Speaker, is that even though the Government Budgeted to spend a certain amount of money that they boast that they would spend that is necessary to heat up the economy, to create the enabling environment for employment to be improved and to grow that is not necessary the case and I will come to that further.

Mr. Speaker, the issue is this what is happening and I remember saying to the Prime Minister during this morning what drives the economy of St Vincent and the Grenadines what drives the economy? Is it investment driven or is it consumer driven? The impression I am getting from the budgetary exercise is that government's expenditure government is of the view that it is not going to get the type of participation that is required from the private sector and therefore it attempts to be bigger and bigger every year.

But Mr. Speaker, the next area I want to move to is the Capital Budget, the Capital Budget [interjections] the Capital Budget [interjections] Mr. Speaker, you know the last IMF commentary, the last IMF commentary ... Mr. Speaker the Prime Minister, the Prime Minister reminds me of one of those old spin bowlers who sufficiently opulent and who would appear to the crease and attempt to throw what you call some sweet balls and long hops in the hope that the batsman will play the wrong shot and get caught on the boundary well, I have been a cricketer for too long Mr. Speaker. [Laughter] Mr. Speaker, I am back at my point [interjection] yes

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: [Inaudible] you are the only batsman they only brought you here after they have exhausted the whole team [laughter]

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: That is understandable. That is understandable. [Laughter] That is understandable, Mr. Prime Minister. That is understandable. Now, [interjections] well, I hope I do not exhaust you, I hope I do not exhaust you [laughs]. That is understandable nothing happens before its time, do not worry. Now, Mr. Speaker, if we turn to Capital Expenditure, yes, Capital Expenditure, Mr. Speaker, what we have noticed is this and we are still on the issue of austerity measures, the IMF report, press release recently indicated that one of the reasons why the Government was able to reduce the deficit was because of the fact that there was some reduction in expenditure even though they did not get the amount of revenues that they Budgeted for. But importantly also in the press release is the fact that the Government has contracted the expenditure on the Capital side of the Budget.

Mr. Speaker, when you spend money on a monthly basis the civil servants are paid their salary that money just circulates, you know you get back the same amount of taxes and it does not seem to have the same significant impact on the economy. It does not seem to massage and provoke the multiplying effect to the extent whereby the economy is heated up and employment is created effectively or satisfactorily. The Capital side of the Budget is what is important, Mr. Speaker, when you spend for the most part you are involved in infrastructural development, it creates employment and for the most part it is distributed throughout the country and so persons from different areas are exposed to being employed.

So, it is always important, Mr. Speaker, to be able to engage in Capital Expenditure that is why it is so significant in small countries like ours for us to ensure that we have foreign direct investors coming here to invest substantial sums to assist the Government in its expenditure exercise and its exercise to create employment. But what we have seen, Mr. Speaker, since 2007, in 2007 Mr. Speaker, the Government only spend 81 percent of that which is budgeted. It budgeted to spend \$179.5 million but it only spent \$145 million, \$34.28 million [interjection] Mr. Speaker, and we cannot talk about prudence and I will come to that.

THE HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER: [Inaudible] one reason is [inaudible] history

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: My Honourable friend the history as important to me is what is being presented to me in these Estimates at this point and time. [Interjections] Now I will proceed, in 2008 the Government spent 52 percent of what it budgeted for, it budgeted to spend \$240 million but it spent \$123.7 million a \$116 million less than it budgeted for. A \$116 million less than it budgeted for.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: A night watchman did better than you.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: Thank you very much. Thank you very much.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: They brought a night watchman [inaudible].

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: But you cannot blame me for not understanding numbers you know. If you do not understand numbers do not blame me.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I know them well.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: But it is your numbers.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I know them well.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: So, appreciate what happened, I am hitting you with your numbers.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: You are hitting.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: Mr. Speaker I proceed, in 2009 – be quiet and listen!

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: [Laughs]

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: In 2009 [laughs] – Mr. Speaker

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Your own [inaudible] embarrass [inaudible] ball.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member [interjection] [laughter] [inaudible] [interjection]

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: In 2009, Mr. Speaker, the Government Budgeted to spend \$190

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member ... just a [interjections] minute.

DR. HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Just a minute.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: [Inaudible] a thousand odd jobs [inaudible] about.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: And then if you want to address the Chair, you would stand up please, and in a proper manner and address the Chair.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Mr. Speaker, when matters get out of hand in this House you normally face this side when you are rebuking and the comments start on this side of the House. Now, every Member of the House is laughing when the Honourable Member is presenting his Budget, this is disrespectful especially since we all acknowledge that this is his maiden presentation on the Budget here we should be sitting and listening and learning from what he has to say. Thank you. [Interjection]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable ...

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: If you would permit me in your defence, Mr. Speaker, when I did the last bit which was perhaps a little too much to suggest that a night watchman was performing better than him, you did me this and told me stop it [shaking his index finger in a warning manner]. I do not know if he saw it and I stopped. I just want to make that point. [Laughs]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Well you see, sometimes we accuse people of being ka-bo-sé and I will just leave the statement right there. I was looking on this time particularly because I am looking at the person speaking. I do that all the time; I do that all the time because if I have to rebuke somebody, I have my way of rebuking them because I want to hear what the person is saying. I heard somebody giggling in a kind of a funny laughter and I looked particularly to see where it was coming from because it is very annoying, extremely

annoying and I have been hearing it almost for the whole afternoon and it almost sounds like the person is interrupting the person who is speaking. It sounds like that way to me. Thank you.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: Much obliged, Mr. Speaker. I shall proceed hopefully in silence [interjection] and in peace. Thank you so very much. Now, in 2009 Mr. Speaker, the Government Budgeted to spend a \$197 million but they spent \$124 million that is \$73 million less than they Budgeted to spend. The Government only spent 28 percent

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Twenty eight percent?

HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: yes of what they Budgeted, no 63 percent sorry.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Ah! [Laughter]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, let us

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: Take notes in silence please [interjection] when a teacher is on the stand please; when a teacher is on the stand please; when a teacher is on the stand. Now, Mr. Speaker, 2010 interestingly the Government Budgeted to spend \$303 million in its Capital Expenditure but it only spend \$83 million that is 28 percent of what it Budgeted to spend; \$83.5 million after Budgeting to spend \$303 million Mr. Speaker. In 2011 Mr. Speaker that is the last actual figures we got, Mr. Speaker, the Government Budgeted to spend \$176 million but it only spent \$72.5 million, 41 percent of what it Budgeted to spend. It did not spend \$104 million. Mr. Speaker, I say that to say that even though that even though, Mr. Speaker, the Government put these figures here of Capital Expenditure in the hope that they would spend it there are two problems, there appears to be two limiting factors but one I have been able to identify in the Estimates, the first one a problem with the implementation rate and the second one a lack of financing. But what I have noticed, Mr. Speaker, the problem is mainly lack of financing. The Government has been unable to get that which it budgeted in Capital Revenues.

You know the Government has a way of in addition to Budgeting for Capital Receipts of \$101 million - \$113 million it has a way of putting in plenty, plenty for Grants. In this Budget it has \$59 million it is going to receive in Grants, 2012 Budget \$61 million. Mr. Speaker, it is rather interesting though the problem with our operation in St Vincent is that the actual figures are usually two years late. And the other problem, Mr. Speaker, is that the presentation of certain tables in the Estimates seemed to differ from year to year because we seemed to have been given information in this Estimate that we have never been given before especially with respect to the function of reclassification for Capital Receipts.

Mr. Speaker, if you look at it very carefully even in 2010 if you look at it the issue of receipts just briefly to make a point, the EU will normally give Grants and we normally have these massive figures for the EU. In 2010 Mr. Speaker, \$25.9 million for Grants, Mr. Speaker, of the EU but in truth and in fact we only received \$3.8 million and the problem is this is that in 2011 again we Budgeted to receive \$34 million in Grants from the EU but we only received \$13 million. What I am trying to say, Mr. Speaker, it comes back to the points I raised

when I opened my remarks here that the Budget must be retrospective or the Estimates must be retrospective and perspective. In order to be effectively prospective, it must be understandably retrospective and the historical perspective must be such that they are so well understood that these experiences must influence significantly the figures that appear in the Estimates. And I am saying to you that on the basis of the information that is in the Estimates and those that are presented to you here, Mr. Speaker, we do not see a reflection of that accuracy, prudence and reasonableness that should really punctuate the presentation of a Budget of involved or influence a Budgetary exercise.

And so when I called out those Mr. Speaker those contractions, those reductions in expenses it is because I want to show, Mr. Speaker, that the Budget did not have to be so big. And my analysis for years, Mr. Speaker, I sat quietly in my home and listened to almost every single Member of this parliament debate.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Hoping that one day you would be here.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: Hoping, yes, that one day [knocking the desk] that one day I will be here and I have analyzed the Estimates that I received every single year and I can say without a shadow of a doubt [interjection]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable, please, please.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: I have noticed, Mr. Speaker, and I have gone just back to 2007, during the Budgetary exercise, Mr. Speaker, I will come forward during the Budgetary presentation debate, I will come forward with more information on the revenue side. But Mr. Speaker, suffice it to say that since 2007 Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that the Government did not have to put this apparently large Budget: did not have to. The evidence clearly shows that there was no need to do it because you are never going to get that amount of money; the evidence shows that and interestingly there are times Mr. Speaker, very briefly that in 2006, 2007 and 2008 the Government got far more money in tax revenues than it Budgeted for.

In 2009 they started losing, they started getting less than they Budgeted for so all of that information the Government had at its disposal and could have informed it as to how best it can construct its Budget; but then again, Mr. Speaker, there is a serious problem in the minds of the administration between the economic journey and the political one. And the problem that I am seeing here now as a result of this eight years of Budget deficit is that the Government seems to have been confused with respect to what is an economic decision and what is a political one because the preparation of the Budget is based to my mind primarily on a political platform as opposed to one that is based solely on economics. And the reason why I say that, Mr. Speaker is because it is good to present these big figures but then you never achieved them, you never not even with a recurrent expenditure do you normally spend that which you provided for and Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that with respect to your Capital Expenditure you never, ever spend anyway close to what you Budgeted.

So, why do you year, after year put all this money in the Budget, I do not understand it, it does not make sense to me. If you are a foreigner coming to St Vincent and the Grenadines and you are driving it is quite possible that you will drive from the top of Sion Hill and come all the way down to Kingstown, you will.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have five minutes more.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: Only five minutes Mr. Speaker?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Only five minutes.

HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: But I have not even started yet, Mr. Speaker, with all these interruptions.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I am sorry, you may have to stop.

HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: Can I have five more minutes, Mr. Speaker?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: You will stop in five minutes.

HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: Because of the interruptions, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I took care of it.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: That does be taken into account; all that is taken into account.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: You want to get rid of me very quickly, isn't it?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: No! No! No! The longer you talk

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: It is better for you.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: it is better for me.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: You would lose more votes.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Eh!

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: Never mind.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: You will lose more votes.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: Now [laughs] Mr. Speaker

DR. THE HONOURABLE SABOTO CAESAR: But why you always about votes?

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: Well, it is votes inside of here. [Laughter]

[Displaying the Estimates book in midair] this is about votes.

HONOURABLE SABOTO CAESAR: I thought you were speaking solely on the economy.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: This is about votes; money, yes, there we are. Now, Mr. Speaker, [interjections] I wish to say also that I have noticed, before I go very quickly, I know I am getting another extra three minutes for another reason but ... Mr. Speaker I wish for us to turn very quickly to page 608 of the Estimates, 608 (I wonder if I have the right thing here) 608, yes. And Mr. Speaker ... [interjections] yes Mr. Speaker, two of them [laughter]. Mr. Speaker, two of them.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: You sound like a newly graduated Pastor with [inaudible] theology [laughter]

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: All right I am glad you are listening so then you can respond. Mr. Speaker, now the issue of the Calliaqua Town Hall, Mr. Speaker, that on 609 Mr. Speaker, that has been going on for over four years now and one would hope that even though the hall is made much smaller than it was before one would hope there would be some expedition in the completion of that hall. I noticed there are some provisions for that and I hope that that would be done, but Mr. Speaker, what is even worse on the same page 609 is that there appears to be any provision for the improvement, significant improvement of the Brighton Salt Pond road. It is mentioned there but there seems to be not any allocation for it and that is very important for tourism, because the Tourists whenever they come off the tourist ships they always go there and the road is in a terrible condition, very, very bad condition, Mr. Speaker.

Page 612, Mr. Speaker again we have the issue of the Lewis Punnett Home a question I asked in the House of Parliament and I am heartened to see there is some appreciation of the need to have it renovated, the difference would be whether or not there would be sufficient funds to do it; well one hopes that very soon it will be done. I have noticed, Mr. Speaker, that there are so many bad roads, drains and back roads that need to be built throughout the entire constituency of East St George I am not seeing any at all, Mr. Speaker, no provisions are made for the improvement of any of them, and with the slow down if you notice on page 640, Mr. Speaker, and I have to go very quickly BRAGSA is only allocated \$14 million down from \$16.5 million. If last year when they were supposed to be given \$16.5 million they were unable to do the roads there, now they are given \$14 million would they be able to do it, that is a question that one has to ask oneself.

But Mr. Speaker, because of time I wish to say that Christmas is really what I enjoy and I saved mental resources mainly for this debate because from the 1st December, I am a different person. I love Christmas like anything else and I wish to say

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Come and eat up some garlic pork.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: I wish to ... some garlic pork?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Garlic pork.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: I will bring my Seventh Day Adventist friend with me when I am coming. [Laughter] [Interjection] Mr. Speaker, I would like to say to the people of the constituency of East St George those who work with me night and day, who gave information with respect to those who need help and those who needed assistance I would really like to say I am very grateful. I would like to wish them indeed notwithstanding the trying times that we are experiencing, notwithstanding the obvious polarization and political division that some day in the near future there will be some social exclusion; there would be some harmonization and unity amongst our people. There understandably will be some meritocracy and I hope that that is what they will wish for their new year when they celebrate their Christmas because I am hoping that they will have a very bright Christmas.

In so far, as this House is concerned the Clerk of the House, the Speaker of the House, my Honourable Friends on the other side of the House and my understandably Honourable Friends on this side of the House; I want to join in wishing everyone a very Merry Christmas. Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is not here to celebrate with us today but I know that he is listening, and I would like to say to him that I hope that he will recuperate sufficiently so that he can celebrate his Christmas under the mango tree, and that he would be able to travel from one home to the next with very little pain and relax himself in preparation for a very interesting Budget debate come January 14th.

Mr. Speaker, I crave your indulgence thank you so very much for the opportunity to say to all concerned exactly what my views are on these Estimates and I must thank God for the opportunity also to be here even if all the batsmen have been exhausted. [Laughs]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for the Southern Grenadines [laughter]

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: I stood up long before the Honourable Member you know you are really biased.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: [Inaudible] from Friday, nobody clapped for you.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: [Inaudible] Okay we will acknowledge now the Honourable Member for the Southern Grenadines and then you obviously Honourable Senator, Minister you would come [laughs]. Well, you see sometimes [laughs] Honourable Member when you are ready.

HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to make my contribution to the debate of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for 2013. Indeed as a good student always do and as a well learned politician in this House over these years I do sit and listen to the contributions that are being made by all Members on either side of this House Mr. Speaker, and as usual when I talk I focus on matters of my constituency and also the portfolio that I do shadow.

Mr. Speaker, each year when we have this type of exercise when it comes around we all hope that the measures that are put in place would take into account you know we use prudence, we use creativity and we use care in

order to bring or to set about the motions that we hope would bring positive change to the lives of the people not only in the constituency that we represent but as a nation as a whole. And during this economic period amidst all the challenges we expect that whatever is put into the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure would be done to the good of all citizens.

We have heard today people talking about giving hope, some spoke about when you go through the Estimates that it does not give you that assurance as if everything will be well. You know, during ... as I come to this House every year we seek to offer a show or highlight some of the problems that are affecting the constituencies that you represent. I am sure each person tries to do that and also on our side the portfolios that we are given to shadow, to look over. And in terms to offer as our critique and also to offer what we think would be good in such cases. Not only do we do that but when there are matters in which we think that we should support we also offer that support to the benefit of the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Mr. Speaker, one thing that I usually do when the Estimates are collected I have the tendency to go through it very carefully to see what has been offered in terms of the issues which were brought to the parliament, in terms of constituencies and also the portfolio that I shadow. Mr. Speaker, you know every time this year we have our Budget and Estimates it is good and I hope that all politicians do that interact with your constituents so you can get a through picture of some of the things that affect them. So that you know, they ask from time to time while interacting with them: "What is in the Estimates for us"? And they also will give you some areas which they think should be the main focus: the areas which they think will make a difference in their lives. And Mr. Speaker, every good politician or representative will do that and logically they expect that some of the suggestions and some of the areas that they presented would be covered, because who best should we get our information from in terms of the issues that affect them than the people who we represent on a daily basis in and out of this parliament.

That is why I know a number of dialogues or consultancy if we want to say that would have gone into the preparations in terms to show that whatever is placed there that the lives of the people throughout St Vincent and the Grenadines would be better for it. And Mr. Speaker, firstly I want to address matters affecting my constituency or constituency matters and later I would go on to that of education. You know I have sat here and I have been hearing about monies millions and some cases in order to deal with roads. Mr. Speaker, that has been the outcry and I am sure in every constituency almost every constituency in St Vincent and the Grenadines but I have searched through the Estimates and I am seeking for clarification and to be guided properly. But in terms of what is on the Capital Estimates and also in terms of the pointers I have not seen anything in relation to roads rehabilitation in the Grenadines and I would like some clarification on that because as I have said I have searched the pointers and I have searched the indicators.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, in relation to road repairs in the Southern Grenadines, the two islands which BRAGSA would be concerned about from their own monies would be Union and Mayreau. Well there is not much in Mayreau; there are not a lot of roads so that would be taken care of through the normal road repair programme through BRAGSA. In relation to Canouan, what I have done in fact I have just concluded the discussions with the developers and I have had Cabinet approve what the developers and I have agreed upon. Over the next three years through particular measures of financing there are capital

projects valued between \$10-12 million all the specifications will come to US; I want the Member for the Southern Grenadines to hear this. Between US\$10-\$12 million over the next three or so years and one of the items is the roads as the Honourable Member for the Southern Grenadines would know that the roads had been repaired they had been built first and then repaired; but among the people in Canouan you do not have a lot of vehicles that cause damage to the roads the bulk of the damage is caused through the developers. So, I have said to them that you have to bear a heavy responsibility for the road repair and the reconstruction and they have accepted that and we would work with them and we would provide certain level of resources and they would.

Mr. Speaker you take for instance the garbage issue, 80 percent of the garbage and I just give these as examples, 80 percent of the garbage are maybe more than 80 percent generated by the developers, again the same issue there and there is a particular way of organising the financing. The secondary school we want to have come on stream with the construction and behind the schools there are two buildings there also for those to be rehabilitated. There is a list of things, if my Honourable Friend would wish to come, you know your Christmas you do not want to probably come and talk to me about it but I have the list of them and I can show you the communication. So, I want to give you the assurance first in relation to Union, which would be the major of the three islands and Mayreau but Canouan we have a special arrangement which we are dealing with. And I say about US\$10-12 million over a three-year period which is a significant amount of additional capital spending to what we have done there already.

HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE: Thank you very much, Honourable Prime Minister, because I had started to become worried as all other concerned representatives would be in terms of looking at the Estimates and in terms of what was there in terms of the development of roads for the people of the Southern Grenadines. [Interjection] because I looked at in response to a question that was before this Honourable House some time before where I asked about certain roads in Union Island and some work was supposed to be done, at least you said BRAGSA indicated that there is a possibility of doing something before the yearend but then nothing has been done. As you are well aware that in representing people you have to bring to the fore the issues that they bring to you and in terms of Mayreau because the people are concerned and they have identified certain roads you know, which would help with their daily lives and development. For example the road leading from righteous and the Youth's Restaurant to the Mayreau Hard Court, now the ladies have complained that whenever it rains, when they have activities on the court whether it be cultural or otherwise they cannot wear their high heel shoes because of the clamp of the mud and all these kinds of things, Mr. Speaker.

Also the Island Paradise Roads from the Island Paradise Restaurant to Gloria Nichols' residence I am just reminding you of some of these roads. Now, Canouan it is very substantial we have the road leading from Pompey's Restaurant to the area called the tamarind, now because of the heavy and regular vehicular traffic the road is splitting and if work corrective work is not done as soon as possible you will have a bigger problem in terms of the use of that road. So, those are some of the [interjection] [laughs] the issues that should be there.

For years I have complained about the Barbruce Village Road, the road from over Dolly Snagg's residence that goes to Delfinous Allick's residence is a very long road and it has been cut for years and the constant rain water over the years have removed that. There is a important road that leads from the Hard Court to Moorings every time it rains heavily that floods, access and things like that also have a negative effect in terms of tourism

development and easy access to and from Moorings also people using the court on a regular basis and things like that.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: What about [inaudible]

HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE: We have also [laughs] Mr. Speaker, you go to Union Island the Bagan Corner Road in Clifton leading to the crossroad in Ashton that has been a problem over the years. What I would like to suggest also in terms of also doing the concreting of that road it is very important that if the road leading from the airport to the Gospel Hall Church in Ashton and it branched on the left to the Anglican Church, apart from correcting the concrete structure that road should also be asphalt in order to help the people of the Southern Grenadines. But while talking of roads in the Southern Grenadines I am also mindful of the situation of our friends to the North that is those in Bequia, and I have also travelled on the south side main road and that road is real bad, the south side main road and I have looked through here and I have not seen anything in the Estimates for that also and also Hamilton Fort Road.

So the Grenadines where the Grenadines are concerned there is urgent need of road restoration and we hope that somewhere along the line that BRAGSA would be able to handle the work during the year and to make sure to ensure that the people in the Grenadines have a good road network system because I know over the past few weeks the people from the traffic branch they have been down there checking up on people with their licenses this that that and everything. So, on the other hand you are doing that on one hand then give the people the facility that they need on the other hand.

The Prime Minister [made] mention of the wharf in Canouan, I am glad that finally after nearly seven to eight years of representation in this House that the Canouan wharf will finally be fixed that was one of the major concerns for the people in the Southern Grenadines and the people of Canouan who ... the residence of Canouan and also all the people who use it, Mr. Speaker.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: But the wharf is [inaudible] years old [inaudible]

HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE: I know. From time to time there was one man who got his hands broke because there was no proper structure for the docking of the boat, the rope burst and broke his hands, and I have been talking about that issue from time to time, year upon year and I

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Your representation is [inaudible]

HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE: and I even prayed about it and thank God praise do answer, I still believe in the Almighty and I am thanking him for the work in remembering people of Canouan and basically all the persons who use that wharf because it has been a safety issue over the years, Mr. Speaker. [Interjection] While Mr. Speaker, if I turn to page 612 in the Estimates, Mr. Speaker, it is under the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment, another issue which we have been dealing with over the years is I have seen here you have plans for a the refurbishment of doctors and nurses quarters in some areas and I have not seen anything in the Estimates in terms for Union Island. Now that building which once housed the doctors and

nurses residence has been abandoned now going into five years. We have to rent additional space for the doctor and things like that and we are hoping that this building which has been deemed unsafe you decide what you are going to do with it and that proper facilities be constructed in order to house the doctor and nurses on a regular basis. Because here we have in some areas Sandy Bay and Campden Park allowances have been made but nothing for the Union Island which has been suffering for a number of years.

On page 600 Mr. Speaker, I am also glad that the outpost, police substation finally there has been allocation for that on the Island of Mayreau. You know I must commend the people of Mayreau they are a very resourceful people and when things affect them they get together as a group, they call meetings, they write to the relevant authorities, they bring in their representatives and others in order to address that problem. And this problem in terms of the police outpost is very much due to the resilience of the people of Mayreau sticking together to make sure that things are put in place because they depend on the tourism industry in terms of yachting, the restaurants there.

Dennis, Righteous, Jean and all the others they depend on the yachting and when you have yacht breakings and things like that it affects their business and from time to time. They started as a private entity in terms of offering security and the police outpost there will be very helpful because ever since we had – we normally call them the Mayreau police but since you have that unit and the training of the young man from Mayreau it has helped to curtail what is happening in terms of yacht break in on the island of Mayreau. It has you know, put a dent in terms of that sort of crime on the island and we must and at this point and time I must give kudos to those men who had first who started to volunteer their service in order to help secure business and the property of not only the people of Mayreau but also visitors to the island of Mayreau. And Mr. Speaker, here we have in terms of \$150,000 for the establishment of police substation in Mayreau, Belair and Fancy and we hope that that substation would be established very soon because it is needed on that island in order to help secure the tourism sector.

Mr. Speaker, education any nation that hopes to move forward and to do well economically must be able to spend in the field of education. We have seen where countries that have invested in education were able to move ahead of some even though they had the natural resources, the investment in education help those countries in order to establish themselves above others. In doing so, Mr. Speaker, we have to look at areas where we are weak and strengthen those areas in order for the young people to succeed and not only target the young but we must also promote lifelong learning. In other words, we must be able to get the small things right and one of the things that I am concerned about, one area that I am concerned about is that of the environment, the teaching, learning environment, it is of paramount importance and it must be able to promote student success because that is what it is all about.

On page 219 of the result indicators, 219 in dealing with this issue, we are looking at “Implement a robust system to school inspection and supervision after training inspector” and the indicator said it is on going. Mr. Speaker, this is a critical area and if we want to ensure success in our schools and to make sure that schools are effective then we must be able not only in terms of inspection of the schools and supervision but in also to make the necessary corrections in order to ensure that the teaching and learning environment is adequate and effective. So, issues such as the one that occurred at the Union Island Secondary School could have been

detected early, it could have been dealt with early and you would not have had any interruption to the teaching and learning process because it is vital that we ensure that our classrooms are safe and that children feel, our students feel comfortable and the teachers in themselves would be motivated and they would be efficacious in their nature to ensure that our young people learn.

Mr. Speaker, I hope within the rest of the time that I have in politics and in this Honourable House and also in this country that we would not have to hear about instances that happened that occurred at the Union Island Secondary School ever again, and that the system must be put in place so that as I said before our teachers, our students and our parents will feel comfortable enough so when they go to the schools they would not have to bother much about the small problems but would concentrate on teaching and learning.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, my Honourable Friend has given away. I appreciate his concern about getting the small things right and we are on the same page there and about systems but I just want to say this, and this is some of the challenges that we have. A school was built, the only secondary school more expensive than that is West St George, and it is three years old. In the building of that school there was a consultant, there was somebody from the Ministry of Works essentially as a site inspector, there was somebody whom the EU had, there was the contractor who had a sum contract, and there is the electrical inspectorate which did the inspection. Now all those are systems but somewhere, I am not apportioning blame here today, I have read the report, but you have the systems but if the individuals who are supposed to do their jobs do not do their jobs properly the systems which you have are thus undermined. I share the Honourable Member's concern about a matter like this. We had to go and spend a lot of money, three years? And then of course there were some other things which happened subsequently which I do not need to deal with but that is the nub of the problem: a school three years you have to do over all the electrical with all those systems of safeguard and supervision? I organised the money, I have systems in place and I do not inspect schools for electrical matters and that is what I am talking about.

HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE: I understand what you are saying Honourable Prime Minister but part of my concern had to deal with the lack of urgency in dealing with the problem, in solving the problem.

On page 596 and this has something to do also, Mr. Speaker, with in terms of supervision, monitoring and all those kinds of things, 596, and the particular points that I want to deal with it has to do with "Upgrading of school premises phase 4" and in that part you have the Clifton Government School which is also of concern because, Mr. Speaker, imagine for weeks you have wind blowing strongly, flapping galvanise and you are calling the relevant persons who are assigned to BRAGSA to remove that and that continued like that. Since you are aware of that you should have been on the job. The school parents are very much concerned in terms of the condition of the school because it relates to safety, security issues, it will lead to whether the ... some of the problems would lead to disruption in the teaching learning process, it would lead to teacher's efficacy. Because imagine even if you have the new part of the school that is built and the emergency exit it has to be nailed up and things like that so supposed something serious happens then what is the problem: rotten doors and all these sorts of things which should have been taken care of early in the school term to ensure that the children and teachers feel comfortable in the building which they are in.

So, these are some of the things we are talking about, Honourable Mr. Speaker, in terms of getting the little problems right because parents should not have to be on the radio complaining about all these small matters which time after time have been reported. But I do not know in reporting the matter to the relevant people in Union Island I do not know how effective they are in getting the information to the mainland but the school is in a bad state and it should not have been and something must be done to address these sorts of issues and to address them promptly, Mr. Speaker, in order to ...; because when the students do not perform then we come up with all sorts of scenarios why they failed and sometimes some of the things that affect them are not of their own doing so we must make sure

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: You know we should not have had that problem, sorry [inaudible] the other school had been built by a builder and not a baker, because it did not last them [inaudible]

HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE: Mr. Speaker, this is the school, this is the one in Clifton; this is not the school in Ashton I am talking about. This is the school in Clifton where both the old section and the new section needed restorative work. The old section is almost as if the whole roof there has to be changed. So that is why it is important that we have robust (I like the word robust) school inspection and supervision to make sure that our learning institutions are [interjection] the Stephanie Browne School, the Stephanie Browne School, you need to look at that institution, Mr. Speaker that ...

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: If my Honourable Friend because we can talk about these practical problems because the extent to which I know them, I am involved with them even though they are not in my constituency it is my business to know everyone. Mr. Speaker, that school is not even ten years old good, sorry fifteen years good, and before the expiration of ten years the school was falling apart and it was declared to be unfit, it would have collapsed on the children and the teachers and lots of money was spent, the person who they had to build it or supervise it I do not know what. And that is why we are faced with these challenges, you build a school seven years ago, ten years ago, you build a wharf twelve years ago they do not give you ten years service; I mean you just cannot throw away money like this. We are faced with the problem we have to correct it but these are inheritances which I have to deal with and that is the reality, you think it is easy.

HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE: Mr. Speaker, I think the Honourable Prime Minister and me we are on a different ... because I am speaking of [interjection] no I am speaking of the Stephanie Browne Government School which is located in Clifton

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: That is the one I am talking about.

HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE: there is an old section and there is a new section and both of them need serious restorative work to be done.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Yes, but how long were they built that is the point I was making.

HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE: Mr. Speaker

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: That is my problem.

HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE: Mr. Speaker, on page 223 “Implement an outreach programme for parents to support their children’s learning in mathematics through active participation” the indicator said, “No progress was done”. Mr. Speaker, from my experience in teaching, the school at that time the Common Entrance passes used to be limited but the Principal and I embarked on a programme where we got the parents involved on a regular basis. We called them in and we show them certain things in order for them to help their children while they are at home and Mr. Speaker, from the introduction of that programme the Common Entrance passes at that school soared, it went up because of the involvement of the parents in the teaching and learning aspect of their children.

So this indicator is a very good one but I am disheartened that no progress to date was made in order to ensure success because at the bottom of education, Mr. Speaker, the paramount reason for education is for the success of our children and all efforts must be made in order to do so. Sometimes it is not the big projects that accomplish these but it is the small ones that you have interaction and motivation and things like that that help our children to succeed and that is why also on the other page 224 you have this indicator (when I see something and it is good, I say it is good) “Implement a system of tracking students and charting progress in literacy and numeracy” that is one of the indicators there. And Mr. Speaker, if this is implemented properly you have the tracking from primary go right up will be able to detect learning difficulties, will be able to detect where children are having problems and you will be able to work with them individually so that at the end of the day our performance at Math and English at C-sec should improve. These are things that will help our students in order to reach further.

“Establishing parenting groups in schools to have parents support their children learning” all these working together can only be for the benefit of our children, Mr. Speaker. So sometimes in order for us to chart a good course and to ensure that our children or our students avail themselves of all the support structures that are there it is necessary for us sometimes to get the little things right and once we get them right, and make sure that the measures are there and they are put in place then the education of all of St Vincent and the Grenadines would be better for it.

We are having in some instances problems in schools especially secondary schools in terms of truancy and all these other things, what are the measures that are put in place? Sometimes you are in the Grenadines so you are far away from the mainland but you also need the supportive structure down there. It is well and good to have it in the Estimates but these measures must reach throughout St Vincent and the Grenadines and sometimes we are at a disadvantage because in terms of the supportive work, you understand. The counseling and all of that you understand, sometimes when that happens a counselor has to come from the mainland in order to deal with certain situations in some schools.

So these are some of the issues, we have to look at the geographical nature of our country and also put the systems and the structures in place to effectively deal with matters and measures that affect our students. For

example, the students of Mayreau, the people of Mayreau I know they are having a hard time because sometimes, not sometimes, they have to pay two sets of transportation: a boat transport also a van transport and provide other financial means for the children while they are in Union Island because they travel to and from Union Island on a daily basis and it is very hard for them. And sometimes we do not understand because of these and other issues that affect children from the Grenadines especially from the Southern Grenadines even when they are on the mainland they have to drop out of school.

Just look last week I got a call from the Child Services, Children Services trying to get in contact with a parent from Union Island whose child was going to one school on one end of the island was suspended from that school placed in another school and apparently I do not know what happened where she was staying and that child end up there. So we need all the support systems and we need to look seriously. I heard the Honourable Prime Minister mentioned it Mr. Speaker, through you at the establishment of the secondary school in Canouan because it is vital because for this term again three students are home for all sorts of reasons but then we have the phrase “No child will be left behind” but what are we putting in place? I know we are opening our hands but we can sit down and we can talk and we can dialogue and we can come up with situations because two boys, one girl they are home again this term what are we going to do in order to get them back in school, you understand?

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: Where were you, I reached out to you, I asked you to reach out to me but you never bothered, come on, Honourable Member, let us be for real.

HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE: [Laughs] we know what transpired, I am not arguing that point, but when the time comes, when the time ... oh yea, you want me there I will come, I will come.

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: Yes.

HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE: And as the Honourable Prime Minister said also on issues of Canouan, you are inviting me; I will come and let us sit down and dialogue because in politics, in politics, in representative politics it is very hard for people on the opposition side. We are talking daily, we heard things about constituency fund and all these kind of things but when they come to us you understand and we have to come to you in order to get the problem solve and I am saying that in order for us for things to work well in this country it is not the Government alone but the Government and opposition and the people of this country must work together for the betterment of this country. [Knocking the desk]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, I agree with my Honourable Friend one hundred percent on this. I was making the comment, when I was in opposition even when I was Leader of the Opposition I will go and wait before Monty Roberts who was Minister of Social Welfare I used to go to Louis Jones with my forms. As Leader of the Opposition I will go and wait, I will go and ask for the forms, I will go and wait do you see, do you really see anybody from the opposition presently going to sit and wait for half an hour or even the Leader of the Opposition on the Member for Social Development? No! I used to do it.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: I tell you it makes no difference. It makes no difference.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: That is not true.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: That is absolutely true, we used to get quarter in the beginning and you stop them.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Have you ever done it? Have you ever done it?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay, could we ...

HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE: Honourable Prime Minister

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: You cannot be too big to ask.

HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE: I have asked for forms over the years and I was told that it is for the indigent poor and to go and deal with the person who is responsible for the programme within the constituency to get them and we have been lobbying on behalf of people within the constituency. [Interjections] there are some situations where, hello, [interjection] it wasn't you but it was somebody else before you, you understand Honourable Prime Minister.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, please, let the Member ... the Member has ten more minutes.

HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE: I just want to underscore the point, Honourable Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Ten more minutes.

HONOURABLE TERRANCE SPEAKER: It is important, we in this House are all representatives of people and sometimes they come to us in order to get assistance genuine assistance. I have talked to the social Worker on Union Island on a regular basis when crisis arise I go to her, I give her names, I give her this, I give her information in order to help people. Sometimes the people themselves after they talk to me I go and I talk to her: such and such are in need of help, they need this, and they need that [interjection] uh! [Laughs] So Mr. Speaker, those are some of the points that we are making, so we do not come here to make mischief we come here to represent people and all we are asking is that we are giving a fair share and opportunity in order to represent people and when we bring their needs to this parliament and speak to the Honourable Members we expect that the needs of the people will be met.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to take this opportunity ... some of these ... there are other areas which I want to deal with in terms of constituency development in terms of educational development for the people, not only for the people of the Southern Grenadines but students throughout St Vincent and the Grenadines and the whole, and I will be dealing with those in the Budget.

I will just like to take this opportunity to wish the people of the ... first, Mr. Speaker you and your family, and the Clerk of the House Merry Christmas. We hope that as the festive season goes on that you will truly be in a relaxed and happy mood. To the Honourable Prime Minister and all the Members of the other side we wish you all the best for the Christmas season and the New Year coming. The Leader of the Opposition is not here and it has always been a pleasure for me to work with him and I hope that he gets well very soon in order to join us back in this Honourable House, and to all my Honourable Colleagues I wish you all the best for the Christmas season and also for the New Year coming. I also want to take this opportunity also to wish Sir James Mitchell one of the founding Members of the New Democratic Party also all the best wishes for the Christmas and the coming year.

And how can I forget the wonderful people of the Southern Grenadines from Canouan, Mayreau and Union Island. I wish to assure you that sometime during the season you are going to see me and once the band ... and you would not only see me once the band Vision is playing that you will also get songs from your representative.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I want some sorrel.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. [Knocking the desk]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: It is the best speech by the opposition by far.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, when you are ready.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, I take it, it is forty five minutes.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Yes, it is still forty five minutes.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, I want to ... I rise to make my contribution to this debate on the Estimates for 2013. Mr. Speaker, throughout the presentations that I have listened to I do not need to recap the figures that are there before us, the Honourable Minister of Finance and the Leader of the House did their presentation so we know what is before us. I will specifically with those areas in my Ministry to some extent to a greater extent but I want to do a general discussion on how we are going here today. There is a theme coming from the other side, Mr. Speaker, that is again we have brought another deficit Budget and despite the lamentations of this deficit Budget there is also the lamentation of so many thing not being done and the wants. I qualify wants, I used the word wants instead of needs, so that if we are to present a balanced Budget let us go to Roman numeral (i) and see how we can present this balanced Budget and in conjunction with that look at Roman numeral (v).

The accounting method that we use here in this parliament and that we have been using in St Vincent and the Grenadines is accepted by all international agencies is the accounting method that we have here. [Applause] It is accepted and I understand that there are trained persons in this parliament who would have other views on how to present accounting statements and financial statements but we deal with the one that we know is accepted in

the form of operations that we do. There are different things for manufacturing companies, there are different things for an NGO, there is a different thing for a catering firm and there are different principles and policies and guidelines within the accounting field but this one is accepted. So let us not debate, and the Honourable Member Senator Lewis, I respect his knowledge and training in this field and it is a pity that he has sought to resurrect a debate of some eight years old, nine years old and just settle, but it is good for him to remind us that at one time the cry in this country was you have to balance your Budget so you can make your counterpart contributions to projects.

Now, if you do the research and the history the Honourable Senator also dismissed the matter of history, if you do your research and history into the presentations done under the NDP administration you may find surplus Budget to about \$3.5 million \$1.8 million, it is balanced the book is balanced maybe \$100,000 to what project could that be contributed to make any sense, economic financial sense? What do you use this for to buy peanuts? So that the Prime Minister will tell you that from the day we form government I have been an advocate of this type of Budget, and I told him on numerous occasions when he is hurting his head and scratching his head that the overdraft for the Government is too small. You cannot run an operation like this on that type of overdraft limit. You have salaries of \$223 million and you try to operate on a \$70 million overdraft?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: \$35 million.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: \$35 million? [Interjection] it is impossible in any business that you run. I am fortunate to have some experience in banking and assessing proposals coming before me and I will totally reject this. I will say that you need more money because as a banker I want to make more interest once you have the security and government has all the security and the whole of St Vincent is security for the government. So, I have always advanced the theory to the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance you are too prudent and careful in this matter, go for a larger overdraft and let us go and deal with it. When it comes to finalizing you would end up with a larger deficit than this, but it is necessary to provide development that we want in a country like this, we cannot do it on taxes. Look at Roman numeral (i) where does the money come from to cover the expenses? Let us look at it; look at Roman numeral (i) - lesson (1) let us go through.

Tax Revenue/Non-Tax Revenue \$508 million that is Current Revenue and then you get Grants, External Loans, Local Loans, Capital Revenue and Other Receipts there is a big lamentation over Other Receipts. Every single Budget presented in this House has a figure of Other Receipts, in the days when you were running a Budget of \$250 million just like under the NDP in the earlier days you might have Other Capital Receipts of maybe \$10 million. I went through it in the last debate that we had on the Estimates, I brought actual figures here I did not see the need to bring them back again but sometimes I should learn from the old leftist who say that the more often you repeat something people pick up something that they did not pick up the last time. So continue to tell the same story all the time and eventually the full story would be told. [Interjection] Well, I do not think I was too great a student of my political leader, so had I done that I might have come again prepared with it today.

We are doing well so far with our mix thoughts but if you look at it the point I am trying to make I am asking the Members on the other side look at Roman numerals (i) there is \$469 million in Tax Revenue, you are telling the people that we are overtaxing them, that is what you are telling the people. We changed some taxes

introduced the VAT, eliminated some taxes and you lamented every single day on the radio that we are killing the people with VAT, so there is Non-Tax Revenue of \$38 million, you want to cut back on that? Let us reduce that by \$10 million, let us reduce the Tax Revenue by \$30 million what would happen your deficit on the other side goes up by \$40 million because the amount of list: the wish list on the other side, you cannot reduce the expenditure.

Every school needs to be repaired, every road needs to be repaired, every playing field wants a synthetic surface and every playing field wants a pavilion. So if we reduce ... and I hear the lamentation BRAGSA has been reduced from by \$16 million to \$14 million. Bills at the hospital to pay for supplies and so on according to the Honourable Member for West Kingstown is dropped from \$7.6, \$7.9 million actual expenditure in 2011 to \$5.8 million in 2013 and he laments that. Does he try to find out if there are improved procedures, to see if we have done enough? And the Honourable Senator Frederick speaks of IT. Do you know if we have installed cameras now in the storeroom to make sure that whoever pulls the linen and so on out will be caught on film? Maybe those are things we know and we put them in place, so we will know the cost of supplies and materials to the hospital will be reduced drastically if not many persons might be locked up. So that what do we do with this deficit that we are talking about? Go below the line of the Current Revenue, go to the Capital Receipts: Grants those carry our capital programmes, let us eliminate there what do you want to do with down below there?

The Honourable Member Senator laments that we said we were going to get so many loans and we never get the loans. So at the beginning so we are overstating our Budget, we should not come so high with the figures, he has been looking at it since 2007 when he dreamed of coming in the House. So, Mr. Speaker, we have to be real, in these times and this type of economy we cannot survive on a balanced Budget with the types of monies we have coming here. [Interjection] well the NDP never did it because when we took office in 2001 we had to spend over \$5.5 million repairing 71 educational institutions in this country [knocking the desk] why was that? You know why that was you prepared and produced a balanced Budget but the same thing you do not get the revenue you were hoping to get, you never got around to repairing the school and we had to repair them. Do not forget that you were there for 17 years not 12. We got \$5.5 million that you could not get at the same time that Britain - when you asked for debt relief, Britain said, "No" and as soon as we took office we got the debt relief of £\$12 million Prime Minister?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Yes.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: And we have been promising and committing ourselves to the people of this country that we would do better than the NDP and we have been doing better than the NDP. [Knocking the desk]

I heard the Honourable Member Senator of East St George; I mean obviously when the gentleman comes to the House and says that he has been listening to every single Budget because he has interest in it and he agreed with me when I suggested that he was preparing himself and wanting to come into the House at that time; and would lament that we spent 81 percent of our Capital Budget in 2007, 81 percent you know. There are few countries in this part of the region and the world who would achieve such implementation rate on a capital Budget [applause] [knocking the desk] very few.

2008 he says was 52% that is when the financial decline went you know that is when the whole financial crisis started 2008 but in 2009 we did 63 percent of the Budget, the Capital Budget.

We fell down in 2010 that was the hurricane year and that basically was a year when the NDP said that they were going to win following the Referendum of 2009 and many public servants believed them and a lot of them put stickers on their cars. I saw them the day after election all those stickers disappeared when we won. The implementation rate was 28 percent but that was in the middle between 2008 and now, 2010 was the middle of the financial crisis and it did put a lot of strain on the Government resources. And in 2011, another bad year for us with the floods in Georgetown and so on we still implemented 41 percent, and I am accepting the Senators figures as being accurate, they cannot be far off from that. But if you take an average of those five years it works out to 53 percent implementation rate [knocking the desk]. Anywhere in the education system in the world that you do test for an exam and you get over 50 percent you pass [laughs]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable ... you give way?

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: Yes, for clarification purposes, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was referring to the issue the contraction of expenditure, the capital expenses not necessarily the issue of the implementation rate. I said there can be three reasons for it had the implementation rate is very poor or the Government is unable to acquire the Capital Revenues to be able to have its Capital Expenditure Budget be met. And I said that I am of the view from looking at the Estimates that it is because you have been able to raise the Capital Revenues that is the reason why you had to cut your Capital Expenditure. [Interjections]

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Well, Mr. Speaker, he is even putting it more in my favour, in our favour. So, if you cannot raise the money but you are able to implement 53 percent on average we got to be magicians [laughs] [interjection] you have to be magicians [interjection] The Honourable Senator has done many projections from his days of auditing firms, audited them in the days of the NCB when he worked there he did many projections, he did many Estimates for the NCB itself and I guarantee you that they never lived up to those Estimates either, never lived up to them. In fact, when we took over the Bank was falling apart when I left in 1984 the Bank had made \$3 million, \$3 million in 1984 we returned a profit after closing down the sugar industry. When I left in 1984, when you took over after me you all ran a deficit for years until Unity Labour Party came in and revived the Bank, there was nothing happening at the Bank, you lost your correspondence relationship with the Bank ... is it Bank of America?

Bank of America under your watch [knocking the desk] at the NCB, I prepared the ground for you to run it and you messed it up. [Interjection] You and Brisbane mash it up, [interjection] [laughs] you and Brisbane mash it up. [Interjections] No I am not going to the place where he is best qualified. I think he is best qualified on the batting pitch. [Laughs]

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: [Inaudible]

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Having occupied so much of my time Honourable Senator may I proceed? Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, so back to this large deficit I know the economic guru is yet to come on the other side and I know that he is going to deal at a level where he is expecting the Prime Minister to debate the levels with him. And I was particularly surprised that the Honourable Member for Northern Grenadines was the one who did the response as the opening batsman it looked as if the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown has been reduced to dot. Oh he has gone outside at the same time. [Interjection] but Mr. Speaker, following on the debate, on the presentation I am making on this matter of deficit and implementation the opposition has to make up its mind whether we are overtaxing people or overspending, they have to make up their mind on that serious decision.

He said, the Honourable Senator said, we are spending more than our revenue so the opposition can make up their mind what they are going to do, as far as we are concerned, this is the approach to keeping things on keel. You know what you want to do at the end of this recession is to be the first out of the blocks that is what you want to do at the end of this recession because you have your platform so placed that when things changed you are first out of the blocks and take full advantage of what is coming to this region after that.

Mr. Speaker, I heard the Honourable Senator Frederick said that we have to do better than the average of the OECS. Now, Mr. Speaker, I wonder where all these bars are coming from, in a region like the OECS where we St Vincent are doing better than the average of all the OECS together after they are lamenting that we had four years they say of negative growth and the Honourable Leader of the House corrected them three years, it is three years and please it is time you start saying it. In your echo chambers you listen to each other too much and you come out repeating the same mistakes over, and over, and over again. Somebody ought to be sitting down and driving some sense into your discussion and said, let us change this thing because the fellers have a point, there was not a deficit in 2011; it was 0.4 percent on the upside, on the plus side, not deficit. And despite all that we had for the four years our average for the four years, our performance was better than the average of all the OECS put together, and we here how Antigua and St Lucia drives the economy of the OECS, we are down at the bottom as far as they were concerned but we were able to manage our resources.

Mr. Speaker, in hard times you have to be able to know how to spend your money. You have to know what to hold on, see how long you can hold on it, and deal with some priorities here. It is like you having your bills, you have your telephone bills, you have your light bill and you have your bank loan to pay, this month you say boy I cannot go more than one month by the bank, if you go more than 60 days, they will call your loan, but you can take a chance with the light bill. So, you say this month I will just pay the telephone and the loan, next month I will pay the telephone and the water, by the time you come back round to the light it is close to three months but you are there, you pay it and you update it. That is how household manage their things and it is how we have to do it in here.

It is not the days when money used to flow at \$120 million of banana sales annually and it those days what was the surplus that the NDP was running on their Budget? \$2 million, \$3 million, \$7 million, a mean [interjection] what are we talking about? Implementation rate for the NDP Honourable Senator in the year before we won the Government in 2001 I think the implementation rate was 18 percent of the Capital Budget, 18 percent, 1999 and the year 2000 absolutely nothing was done on the Capital Budget in this country, I think one year it was 27 percent and the other one was 18 percent subject to correction but that was my visual memory. [Interjection]

Mr. Speaker, let us go to Roman numeral (v). How much time I have there, Mr. Speaker, because I want to deal with my Ministry a little bit, because this is important to establish this because of the cries I am hearing from the other side?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Twenty seven minutes.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: I have 27 minutes left, okay. Mr. Speaker, Roman numeral (v) is a telling page in the Estimates, a telling page and I really think that the Members of the Opposition and the general public should look at it. One hundred percent of your expenditure is \$622,224,000 that is 100 percent. What are the priorities, what is No. 1? What is No. 2? What is No. 3? You get \$622 across the bottom; you get \$622 coming down this side. Let us take the Ministries: No. 1 is the Ministry of Finance that will always be there because the Ministry of Finance pays the debt and that is a large sum, leave that out. No. 2 Ministry of Education that is what it is you know, 17.56 percent of the Recurrent Expenditure is the Ministry of Education - No. 2 on our priority list. No. 3 what is No. 3? Ministry of Health and hear the lamentations here about Accident and Emergency.

I remember the election campaign in England the last one when Labour lost, No. 1 one of the main debating points in that campaign was the wait at Accident and Emergency, I do not know if you all recall that they were talking eight to twelve hours, eight to twelve hours persons have told me who worked in hospitals. Ours is not eight to twelve hours, let us not [interjection] you see sometimes like there is a matter to be dealt with inside of this House you know, sometimes we sit down in our echo chambers and we tell ourselves these things and no one questioned them and say, "Comrades, what you all are saying is not true, let us check it out". And Accident and Emergency is abused and misused in this country and in the OECS.

What you get coming to an Accident and Emergency here is what should be going to a clinic and sometimes when somebody who has an ailment like a pain in his leg or his leg is swelling that individual considers that priority in his health, but when he goes to the Accident and Emergency he really meets, he or she meets emergencies. So the emergencies are dealt with in Accident and Emergency, the others have to wait but we do not have a waiting time at A&E here for any eight to twelve hours. Occasionally you may find one, it is no longer; it is not like that. So, when I hear the Honourable Member for West Kingstown talking that: "Oh it is hopeful to reduce it by 50 percent" it is good wish, I wish the hospital here then we would come down to one hour wait and two hours wait and three hours wait. I wish they would get it down to 50 percent but let us not fool ourselves on these issues but this is where we spend our resources despite the fact that we have reduced supplies and materials under the Ministry of Health for what we actually spend in 2011 by \$2 million; they are still No. 3 on our priority list, still No. 3. So, I want you all to do the exercise go through it and see what you are going to eliminate to reduce the deficit, use that page [laughs] when you come up with it I am sure the Honourable Prime Minister will reduce the deficit for you.

[Give me a glass of water please] Mr. Speaker, No. 4 Ministry of National Security, so we look after paying our debts, we educate our people, we take care of their health and we provide proper security for them. What do you want? What more do you want from a government blood? Think of these priority areas and stop complaining about two or three potholes in a road down in Union Island. I would wish to have tomorrow morning \$50

million to fix the roads in this country because I am a roads man; I have driven on every single road in St Vincent and the Grenadines and there are very few I have not driven on. I cannot say the same in the Grenadines, Union Island I have, Bequia I have; Canouan I have but the others I am not so sure about them, Mustique and Mayreau and so on the two roads. But Mr. Speaker, let us be real with what we have and stop lamenting about this matter.

So having established that we have to run a deficit Budget, let us work together as one on this and not run down the Honourable Prime Minister and the Unity Labour Party for wanting to do this, we are not doing this to put money in our pockets, we are doing this to keep this ship afloat until better things come. [Knocking the desk] we have to do it and I support the Prime Minister 100 percent on this approach to the finance of this country. [Knocking the desk] in fact, if tomorrow morning, if tomorrow morning the Prime Minister listens to me and goes for \$100 million overdraft they have to pay for it eventually you know but *alyuh gone get the roads fix*, so encourage him to do it. Do not lament when he goes \$25 million, it is \$25 million we are talking about, you all say one hundred and something million but the Honourable Senator says we cannot collect some of the money, and we cannot spend some of the money because we are not going to collect this money. Sometimes it is a bit confusing but I believe that we are on the right track.

Mr. Speaker, on the matter of Ministry of Works, I just want to let the Honourable Member for Northern Grenadines know that the Fort Hill Road is on the programme to be fixed. I just got \$5 million from the Minister of Finance for BRAGSA to do \$2.5 million of road cleaning and \$2.5 million of road patching and repairs. We could not do a lot of concrete works because there is a lot of asphalt works to be repaired. Those of you who live on the Leeward Highway and particularly so the parliamentary representatives for North Leeward and South Leeward, I am sure that you would be pleased with the little that has been done on the Leeward Highway. [Interjection] well Fort Hill, what *de* call it Fort Hamilton [interjection] Pointe Hill? Okay that is to be done. We have started some of the works and the others will be going full blast by the end of this week, well during the course of this week the rest will be implemented, so that is \$2.5 million.

Those Members who are represented on the other side you can call on me I will tell you exactly what particular roads will be repaired, I do not want to go through that entire list now but there is a total here of about \$2.738 million which exceeds my Budget, so I am running again a deficit Budget to try and repair a \$2.5 million. So that is how you have to do things, make some credit, borrow some money get things done and then money would come to repair it.

Mr. Speaker, jointly again if you check on Roman numerals (iii) you would see the same four priority areas when you add the Capital Estimates to it.

1. Ministry of Finance
2. Ministry of Education
3. Ministry of Health
4. Ministry of National Security

So they maintained those four positions if you take them with recurrent alone or when you add capital to it they are the same priority areas for us: 33.4 percent of the total Budget of \$799 million. For the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning 17.4 percent or \$139 million, for the Ministry of Education 10.9 percent or \$86.7 million for the Ministry of Health \$79 million or 10 percent, 9.9 percent for the Ministry of National Security. So I do not think that we are doing too badly in that area.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for West Kingstown spend some time on the Capital Estimates of the Ministry of Works and again other Members referred to it, so I think we should go there because I want ... if it is one thing that the opposition is pretty bad at and I hate to know that engineers are bad at arithmetic and math my brothers being engineers are pretty sharp at it. The Honourable Senator being a trained accountant and a banker like me would have been a little bit sharper than some of the others, but he himself I believe that he made an error when he said 88 percent rather than 78 percent; it is on page 608; total basically \$7.958 million. Those are old monies that we owed to the contractors on the Windward Highway which if the Honourable Prime Minister tells you, I asked that they be taken out of my capital Budget but for the accounting, reckoning and certification it had to stay inside there, that is why it is still inside there, so that is \$7.9 million. The total Capital Budget for the Ministry of Works is \$32.9 million, so if you take \$7.958 million which are the ones he was talking about from \$32.95 million we still have \$25 million inside there to spend. So, to come to this House and say out of the \$32 million he hardly had had \$10 million to spend and I will go further.

If we take out the slow accounts that have been reported year, after year some of them it comes up to \$1.476 million take that off of the \$25 million we still have \$23.5 million in the Ministry of Works to spend, and I want to identify them to show you that they are real and they will be spent. Well, he admitted to making an error in reading the Estimates on the matter of Congo Valley, he was rubbishing the Prime Minister to put a \$100,000 project in the Capital Estimates and the international bodies would have said Honourable Prime Minister that we are a failed state. But he failed to read the same account number on page 610 that showed it a \$4.9 million project that is the rehabilitation of Congo Valley Road; \$700,000 for the drainage project in Park Hill, \$600,000 for the rehabilitation of the old NCB building that is up here where NCB was those are almost at implementation stage to be financed under the 2013 Budget. The National Disaster Rehabilitation and Reconstruction \$632,000 for counterpart, \$4.553 under external loans on page 610, so add those you get \$4.5 and what we said here \$632,000: \$5.2 million. Those projects are at launching some have launched already so this is real money to be spent in 2013. In 2014 it is \$12 million and in 2015 it is \$15.686 million.

Rehabilitation of the South Leeward Highway, well the Colonarie Bridge let us go to the Colonarie Bridge first. Rehabilitation of Colonarie Bridge that is work in progress, in fact yesterday afternoon I went to the country and I stopped to see the work that is going on there. The Bridge has been demolished three of the beams, precast beams, pre stressed beams have been laid, they had two more to put in and they have started putting slabs on top to run the steel and then to cast the slab on top of that. So that is real work ongoing and in the Budget you have Colonarie \$2 million under Grants and \$500,000: \$2.5 the project was \$3 million, so between the time of start and the end of this year they would be spending \$500,000 on the bridge. So that is real money to be spent.

Rehabilitation of South Leeward Highway: that carries a total ... it is also under external loans on page 610, and you will see in the extended estimated project cost \$35.9 million that is what it is going to cost us, we have to

pay back that loan you know [laughs]. So when you talk about debt being high and you want Leeward Highway fixed it is \$36 million, yes, so therefore stop lamenting about the debt because your debt servicing would go up, your interest factor will go up because I have the details here. The loan is going before CDB I believe on the 12th of this month, we got a Grant already, the study is done you all had seen the people there working: the surveying team, they have done their assignment they have done their design and the documents are with the Chief Engineer. And the proposals have been presented is being done by the consultants and it should be presented at the CDB and the total would be \$46.3 million coming out, \$6.826 million from the Government as counterpart contribution and \$36.8 million from the CDB that is how I read this document. Now that is to cover the entire project, and then we have to tender so that is why you are only seeing under South Leeward Highway under Grants \$2 million for this coming year because by the time you get the tendering process going and get it approved and mobilization for the contractor it is far down in the year. So, please do not expect to see tractors and workmen on South Leeward Highway anytime before the middle of next year, we will continue to patch it like we are doing now and I drive on it every day, I know it is much comfortable than it was three weeks ago and I want to thank BRAGSA for it because I tired cuss them about it.

What is to be done? We are going to improve the Campden Park junction that is by *Tutty* there just by the Clinic, it is difficult to go around there with a 40 ft container to the Campden Park Port or for it to go Leeward and with Buccament being there and prospects of development at Mt. Wynne Peter's Hope you are going to get 40 ft containers going down there. The entire roadway will be widen up to 21 ft at all areas in the area of Pointer Peters there where you call round there again? Junka Rain that whole shuffler, right that whole bank side is going to be cut down and widen. We had anticipated tunnelling through but it is going to cost you more to tunnel through because you have to buy Tutty houses and you have to buy the lands above them, because those lands above them I believe are privately owned. And to tunnel through there to come back right in front of Pointer Peters' place, which would have given you a nice straight drive and you could have even tunnel through there and go through Questelles and come out down by choice hill gap. When we talk about tunnel fellers does just turn their eyes but it is real but it cost plenty money but we are still going to do Cane Garden by the time the Argyle International Airport is finished. The next big project is the Cane Garden Tunnel.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Ten minutes.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Ten minutes, yes. Mr. Speaker, we are going to realign the Questelles junction, the Rillan Hill junction, Buccament Bay junction and the hospital area drainage improvement. Remember the Honourable Member for West Kingstown was talking about it that is in the project. You know what we are going to do they are going to take the water from going through the hospital and running through Victoria Park and go over into the river behind OT. That is the plan so the hospital will no longer flood, go across either go through Victoria Park, I advised them not to go through Victoria Park because we done spend a whole set of money inside their fixing it up to go around the wall and go through the road by OT and come out behind the Catholic Church and empty behind them. And rehabilitation works to Campden Park and Buccament Bridges they need some rehabilitation work. So that is South Leeward Highway Mr. Speaker, hopefully before the end of this year we will get word on the approval of the loan from CDB.

The details basically 3.61 percent variable on the ordinary capital resource and on the special fund resources 2.5 percent fixed. So, your interest would go up, your payment for your loans would go up but we have a grace period on this. It looks like on the OCR we will have four years grace period and on the SFR we are going to have ten years grace period that is the way I interpret this document that I have.

Mr. Speaker, so to rubbish what the Member for West Kingstown was saying on the matter of my capital Budget in my Ministry, it still has if you take out the whole amounts we still have \$23.5 million to spend this year and it is going to be spent in 2013 because this money here is sure money. We come down and you have – that is South Leeward Highway, I have taken out the Calliaqua Town Hall to suit the presentation of the Honourable Senator because you say that money been there for a long time, but if it stays in it is going to be worked in the \$25 million, so I am just giving you the benefit of the doubt and the Honourable Member.

Langley Park River Basin \$800,000 those works are in place they are ongoing ,contracts are being issued and being approved, FRANCO got one, Bailey Contractors got one and Sea Operations got one; they are real work is ongoing. There is going to be another Bailey’s Bridge just below TATA above, so when we break to build back the road in Basin Hole you would be driving over at the top to go over, those are real projects. Vermont Nature ... I said Vermont Nature? Vermont Francois [he would like to claim ownership] I listened to the Honourable Member at length this morning but I said let me give in at least he get a chance to let go what is in his chest because I allowed the Honourable Member for West Kingstown to go on about the Congo Valley Road, and then I roped him in and he had to conclude that what I was saying made sense and he conceded. But the Honourable Member went on about us threatening the feller to throw his thing in the river.

I have sat with Emrol and his woman on more than four occasions in my office trying to solve that problem [interjection] I do not want any back chat on this I listened to you without any

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Common law wife.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: His common law wife, his woman whatever they agreed with the settlement we gave them you know, they agreed. We valued the house the land is not theirs they built the house, informal settler, we valued it, we gave him replacement monies (relocation monies) and we paid rent for him for almost a year that was the settlement but that took us nearly a year to come around to settle and the bridge is being built. So, it is not dead money in here it is working money, it is an actual project that is going on. [Knocking the desk] In fact, a very senior citizen came from Vermont to see me yesterday told me, *“I glad how alyuh got that bridge going now because is dem boys on the other side who tell dem not to move”* and he lives just next door and he is not afraid to say so because he got plenty mouth, a very senior citizen.

Colonarie Bridge I have dealt with. Learning Resource Centres I have included that in the \$1.476 million. Murrays Road, this matter has been inside here for a while and I would really ... it is under External Loans we are going to try to give it priority early in the New Year after the first quarter when we could get some release for monies I will try and get that done. You know that road was done over in our time, you know from Sally Springs to customs was done over under this administration, it started failing four years ago, so the point the

Prime Minister was making this morning is a valid point with regards to implementation of projects in this country and professional work. You had proper supervision, you had contractor, and the work was done.

You would recall while that project was going on I criticized my own brother's company and told them that I am holding up their monies because I was not happy with the asphalt that they were laying down, you all will recall that. We got five years out of it, how could you spend I think it was \$5 million to repair a piece of road and get five years out of it? So, there is \$1.2 million here just to clean it back up and put back a surface back on it, we are not going to have to go down to do base work back again, because remember that Murray Road at some places was built on clay there was no stones on the bottom that is why part of it had to be concreted.

Vigie Highway well at long last a contract had just been awarded to Kelectric for one point something million dollars to do a second phase on the Vigie Highway that is between the roundabout and up by Villa, Fountain road gap, there are two ends that have to be done but there are \$6.8 million in here not just for that area but to do other works. I mean one of the worst pieces of road, I hear man complaining about roads those of you who drive from Peruvian Vale to Glen side it is one of the worst pieces of road in this country and it is very precipitous and to dodge and weave between those potholes going around there I insisted on the \$2.5 million that Prime Minister just give me that Glen side to Peruvian Vale must be improved; we cannot get it. Sister J we spending the money there, I think the contractor Marks has been put on that and he is going to patch out the worst of the potholes, I cannot get all for the money that we have. [Interjection] Yea! Yea! Craters

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Three minutes, Honourable Member.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: I know. And I have dealt with the rehabilitation of the Highway. Mr. Speaker, [interjection] just one final thing, Mr. Speaker, while in the Estimates here under my Ministry you do not see some stuff BNTF has \$5.6 million to do feeder roads and so. BNTF has \$4 million in one area and \$1.7 million in another area, so those of you who are parliamentary representatives do not only look to Ministry of Works because they are going to build footpaths and village roads and so on, because they are what you call the Rural Transformation BNTF now falls under that; so do not look to us.

Besides the \$14 million that is allocated under Grants and contributions to BRAGSA local government also has \$3.820 million and again they clean village roads, patch village roads and repair small concrete walks. So do not just burden BRAGSA there are other areas; as parliament representatives use every avenue that you can find to see if you can get work done in your constituency. I am very supportive of it I want to help as much as possible but you all have to understand that the resources are low and they will be low for a while. I am prepared to work along with you to try to get the work done because I am not doing it for you to win back your seat, I doing it for the people who voted for you and next time if I do a good job they might vote for me instead of vote for you.

[Interjection] so, it makes sense if I work with you and get the work done [knocking the desk] Mr. Speaker, I think I have exhausted my time and I want to extend Christmas greetings. I do not have a constituency, the Honourable Member for East Kingstown never fails to remind me that I do not have a constituency but I do have a constituency, Mr. Speaker, it is larger than any individual constituency represented in this parliament and

that is the Unity Labour Party and the supporters of the Unity Labour Party of which I have the honour to be the General Secretary. I never dismissed the reality that it is because of the position I hold and the work that I have done and the support that we have out there why I am in this House representing and being a Minister of government.

So I want to extend Season's greetings to all Members of the House, the Speaker, everybody and although there are sad times and there are some tough times, I believe I want before I close to congratulate the Honourable Prime Minister on finally producing and delivering on the BAICO matter [applause]. I think he has slaved on it, trust me he has slaved on it, I myself have said to him, I said, "Prime Minister you spend a lot of time on this matter and regional matters". He said, "Julian there is a larger picture than just St Vincent and I said, "I appreciate that", but he has delivered as he promised and if a man delivered on the first promise I will accept all the other promises and I believe [knocking the desk] that the other two tranches that he is talking about will come on stream and will be delivered to the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Merry Christmas to one and all.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I recognised you but I think at this time we should take the ...

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Suspension for Members convenience.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Yes.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, we can return at 7:00.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: That is quite hopeful. [Laughs]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: 7:10?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: [Laughs] 7:10, 7:30.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I am obliged, Mr. Speaker.

I beg to move that this Honourable House do stand suspended for about a half an hour for Members' convenience.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: All right.

**Question put and agreed to
House suspended at 6:39 p.m.
House resumed at 7:29 p.m.**

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Pray be seated. Just before we took the suspension I recognised the Honourable Member for North Leeward, I am going to ask him to give me a few minutes so I can have his time correctly. All right, okay, it is now 7:29 p.m. you may begin. Honourable Member, you may begin.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, I rise to give my contribution to the 2013 Budget Estimates. Mr. Speaker, before I begin my presentation fully I wish to crave your indulgence to extend my deepest sympathies and condolences to the late *Rudy* Stewart Louie a young man from the village of Rose Bank in North Leeward. Last Friday around midday thereabout I believe the entire country of St Vincent and the Grenadines was in shock upon receiving the very sad news of the passing of this young man in tragic circumstances. *Rudy* as he was affectionately called by the people of the constituency and elsewhere was a very young man with big ambition, persons who are familiar in the area of culture, and so on they will recall *Rudy* was the driving force behind the Roses Crew Soca outfit which in some way or the other contributed and changed the Soca music in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Rudy also was an avid sports personality, he was involved in athletics and just Sunday or two Sundays ago was a participant in the North Leeward 5K where he placed second in his category. He was also a very active member in football and was playing in the current North Leeward competition. He over the has years organised the summer fest programme that offer leadership skills and other training to young people from age 5-8 in the North Leeward area and his promotion company called “Hot Vibes Promotion” was also responsible for promoting various culture shows in the North Leeward. And the people of North Leeward during the carnival time looked forward to his Soca Fest and annual events on the national scale to the extent where he would have brought it to the North Leeward community artistes from all over the Caribbean to the doorsteps of the people in North Leeward.

He was my personal friend and I will miss him greatly. I just received some information that his funeral will be on the 16th December and I am hoping that and I know as well that he will get the turn out as we say that he fittingly deserves because in the short years he would have contributed tremendously in many ways to St. Vincent and the Grenadines, so my sympathies to his family and may his soul rest in peace. Thank you very much. I also wish to pay respects to Senator Francis on the passing of his brother and I understand that Minister Daniel also lost a brother so my sympathy to you as well.

Mr. Speaker, I have sat and listened to the various presenters and also the Prime Minister this morning presenting the Estimates [tape jumped] me that is I would not have much to talk about, however, I just wish to say that haven't listened to the Minister of Transport and Works Senator Francis where he is saying to the effect that it is good to have a deficit Budget, as a matter of fact if it left to he alone it would be bigger that is what he said.

[Laughs] and because he said with a ... well he indicated or what he said with a bigger deficit you get more things done but, Mr. Speaker, we have seen in this Honourable House where a deficit Budget has been presented and when we look at the contribution of spending a lot of money in terms of economic growth we are not seeing that happening. And we are wondering why are we spending and hence the reason why I agree with the Honourable Senator Lewis when he was making the point that you have a lot of figures here but in the

actual spending it is not done so the Budget is really a farce in terms of what is being put on paper and what is actually being spent.

I also heard as well that the difference, the deficit is \$25 million well I do not know if I am seeing right because under details of expenditure from Wages down to Sinking Fund a total of \$622.2 million, and when I look at the Revenue Estimates on the other side you have \$508.5 million so the difference is about \$113 million thereabout. So maybe the mathematicians on the other side they could explain to us on this side how that could amount to \$25 million. Mr. Speaker, I have noted with great interest the amount allocated for wages and salaries for 2013 \$26.9 million thereabout and compare that with the Estimates for 2012 \$250.6 million wages and salaries. We were told this morning the reason for that is because of the 1.5 percent and also to make provisions for people who come back with Degrees and you want to increase their salary and so on. Well Mr. Speaker, if that is the case is the Prime Minister actually saying that come 2013 that the hundreds of young people who left the Community College and so on there will be no place for them in terms of employment?

Because if the reason given is to deal with persons who have their degrees and also the 1.5% increase to the public servants, as I said I am wondering what hope is this Budget giving to the young people of this country, this Estimate sorry, what hope the young people of this country, what hope do they have in terms of a better tomorrow. Yet we are talking about spending more will bring more benefit to this country. I believe as others would have said on this side that the purpose of a Budget, of an estimate is to indicate to the people of this country what the Government will be doing to improve their lives and it is clear from the figures we are seeing here that Vincentians are in for a very hard time. And the Minister of Transport and Works alluded to that because the point what he said, "Until things get better", if we are dealing with a deficit Budget until things get better, it is an indication that this year like this coming year 2013 like this year and the year before that it is going to be a hard time in St Vincent and the Grenadines based on what was said here by the Minister of Transport and Works.

So we have to band we belly as we say in North Leeward and other way in St Vincent and the Grenadines for the year 2013 and beyond, because the project for 2014 and 2015 in terms of expenditure, well expenditure that is we have to come to the conclusion that we are in for the long haul.

Mr. Speaker, I noted with interest as well that Goods and Services have been reduced by little under \$5 million. We know the hardship experienced in places like the hospital and so on, supplies for school and other areas that depend on government for supplies; and with a reduction in Goods and Services the people who are affected the most in this country are people from the lower bracket in terms of the very poor people in this country who look to government in terms of providing their many needs. And if this amount that we had for 2012 we were left with a lot of things not being done and to reduce that by little over \$4 million again for next year it goes to show that trouble as I said before lies ahead. I sometimes wonder, Mr. Speaker, that when we are in this House debating you know and we on this side make certain comments and you listen to the crosstalk as if we are saying something that is not right.

You know I recall during the year that several questions were asked from this side, the questions mostly, Mr. Speaker, dealt with matters that we see. We on this side realised that our constituents are lacking and they need

these services or a piece of road fixed or whatever, a building, something to do some repairs to a school or road or whatever but we do that in the interest of our constituents the people who we represent in the parliament; and the kind of crosstalk sometimes, Mr. Speaker, as if we should not be asking these questions. Having said that I am glad to hear a while ago when the Honourable Member for the Southern Grenadines was on the floor that once we approach Ministers of Government then some of our needs will be met. Well, I am glad to hear that and I hope that it is something that is for the new year that we could look forward to and all of St Vincent and the Grenadines will benefit not just those areas that are government control in terms of seat allocation.

Mr. Speaker, with an increase in the Expenditure on the Current Account I have a concern from the North Leeward constituent that I want to highlight it a bit and I want the Minister of Education to maybe when in her Budget presentation or whenever maybe to shed some light on it. It has to do with transportation of children in North Leeward to schools in Kingstown and also transportation of children in North Leeward itself. There were two buses, two school buses one that ran between Spring Village and Chateaubelair that do the local transportation and the other would take children from Chateaubelair into Kingstown. For a while the system worked very well and persons commended the Government for coming to their aid in this regard, but for several months now this problem with the buses not working is one that is causing great pain and headache to the people of the constituency especially those who have to travel out of Kingstown.

I know on many mornings sometimes all after 9:00 o'clock the kids are on the road trying to get a ride and some of the van drivers refused to carry them because they say they pay less and they prefer to take the adults who would pay the full price. I am asking the Minister of Education this is something that could be looked into and let us see how best it could be solved and having the kids get the regular use of the bus service. Also Mr. Speaker, maybe for future consideration someone told me that the reason why the buses are having so many problems, the North Leeward terrain is not an easy thing to traverse, and it is suggested that maybe the kind of truck style like what they have I think there is a truck in the Wind Ward side that is built in a bus that maybe the ideal thing for that kind of area because it has more power and it could take the rigours of the road.

Those fancy coastal buses that we have now are not suitable for North Leeward at all because mainly we had a few in the past and they did not last very long. So that is something that is very burning especially the parents are very concerned about it because it is taking a toll on their pockets because in order for their kids to get to school on time they have to pay the full fare. The children have to tell the driver, "Listen I am going to pay my full fare" and then the driver will take them or we bring them into Kingstown. So this is something the Ministry needs to check out and let us do what is best for the children.

Mr. Speaker, I want to spend a little time on the Ministry of Agriculture because ... and in particular I want to look at banana in particular because from since we were wrecked by Black Sigatoka banana was the topic of everybody, on the talk show and on the street corner everybody talking about banana and so on. I know that sometime in the last Budget I think the P.M. mentioned about the BM programme that will give the industry a boost in terms of assisting in getting the industry back in order; but in the meantime Mr. Speaker, what we are seeing in terms of government effort in this regard is one that to me and to farmers especially on my side that I know about personally, to them it seemed as if we they are not given the encouragement to continue in the industry.

We, all of us here know the importance, the significance of banana to St Vincent and the Grenadines and it would be hard on us as a nation to let that industry die. We know for a fact that over the years banana contributed significantly to the economy of this country and the persons affected mostly were the people in rural St Vincent, the very poor people who farm banana on their small plots and so on. And they are the ones who are feeling the pinch now because some of them who know nothing else but banana planting and a little farming and other farming extra but their main income was banana and for them now to be living on the bread line on a day to day they would not know what tomorrow holds we need to do something very serious.

Now, I noticed Mr. Speaker that in terms of the Recurrent side of the Estimates when it comes to the Agriculture Ministry it is basically the same in terms of the numbers, I think it is about \$21 or \$20 million thereabout, over \$20 million or something like that. Let me get my paper: \$21 million right, it is on the recurrent side that is the every day and the monthly money that we spend to make sure things go according to plan. In terms of the Capital side now, I think it is little over \$12 million an improvement over last year I believe but, Mr. Speaker, I think that an industry that is so important and affecting the lives of so many people that more emphasis should have been given to this much important sector from a government perspective.

I am saying that because we are here in St Vincent and we are depending a great deal on the BM programme which is coming out of the EU and we know sometimes in getting funding from the EU is not when we want you know, it is when they want to give us. So, in the meantime, Mr. Speaker, I would have thought that a lot of effort would have been done to bring some form of relief to banana farmers in parts. It was done yes but it was not sustained for over a time, hence the reason why in some quarters there are feelings of frustration among farmers and so on so we need to pay some attention to that.

I believe the that Honourable Minister in charge now seems to be ready to go but it does not make sense that you are ready to go and you do not have the resources to do so. As a man who came from the banana country himself would understand the plights of the people concerned, and as a result would feel a bit as if he is not doing enough that is my personal feeling on it, maybe when he comes he could say how if he is vibrant, and if he is positive about what is happening in the sector. Mr. Speaker, I am not talking about the [inaudible] I am talking about the reality now [laughs] Mr. Speaker, in this country we cannot slight the importance of agriculture to St Vincent and the Grenadines in no way could we do that. We cannot slight as well the importance of things like fishing for St Vincent and the Grenadines and so on, and areas such as agriculture and fishing in particular are areas that could bring a lot to SVG. But in terms of the Government expenditure in this regard it is as if these sectors are being slighted.

You know we talk about how much they are contributing and we are not putting enough effort in terms of resources into these areas. And the Estimates, Mr. Speaker, in my opinion we have not done justice to agriculture, to fishing in particular I believe we could do better and we must do better.

When I look at the Estimates, Mr. Speaker, as I said I compared it to some extent with the last Estimates and I was looking for something different, something creative; something that would signal to the populace that in this hard time there is a light at the end of the tunnel I was definitely looking for that. But what I saw from the Estimates is as my brother Nature put it “hopelessness to some extent” because when you have in certain key

areas you have reduction because like in the same Ministry of Agriculture when you look at the figures it is kind of similar to last year but it is slightly smaller. When I heard that there was an increase of \$13 million at least on the Recurrent Expenditure, I said because of the problems that we are experiencing in one of our most important productive sectors, I thought that a lot of that money or half of it at least could have been channelled into agriculture and fisheries because of their importance to St Vincent and the Grenadines. These are areas that we can earn for this country.

We talk about the glory days every now and then the amount of money I heard somebody mentioned at one point \$120 million that we collected in revenues and I am very sure that this money was collected by the ordinary man, the ordinary farmers in this country but we know times have changed. But we as a nation need to do better in terms of showing the stakeholders that we are serious and we are ready to be at their side in times like these. This Budget, Mr. Speaker, you know reminds me when I was much younger when we pay monopoly and you are winning and you get all the money and you own all the property and when you come to reality and when the game over you realise that it is just paper money it does not have any value at all.

Mr. Speaker in St Vincent and the Grenadines we are not a rich country by far but we can do better in terms of our management. And you have to ask yourself, Mr. Speaker, and I heard the Minister of Transport and Works talk about it when the Honourable Senator Lewis was on the floor debating and was giving down the list of the implementation rate you know, and the Honourable Member said because the average 52 should be given a pass mark, but what is important you know, we talk about the New Democratic Party in their time did not reach that far but yet we had economic growth exceeding the amount that is today with an higher implementation rate so something is wrong. Because if we back then could have gotten growth way above no deficit you know, no negative growth but above 5 percent in some instances, we have to ask ourselves with a low implementation rate why were we doing so well in terms of our economic growth back then. Then something we were doing right inspite of the fact that we were implementing at a lower level. [Knocking the desk]

Mr. Speaker that is why we are saying you know, big numbers sometimes is not all of it, it has to do when you put a Budget in my opinion is how it affect the ordinary Vincentians; the ordinary Vincentians, how that person is affected they would tell you whether or not things are going good. You know people Vincentians look to us for leadership and those who are listening on the radio and on the television they are there listening to us tonight because they want to know what the parliament is doing to make things better for them. They want to know that and when we come to this Honourable House and debating the Estimates we have to be very mindful of what we say, Mr. Speaker, because we have the young people who are listening, they want to know what is in store for them. And as I mentioned I spend some time talking about the farmers and the fisher folks they want to know what is in store for them as well.

So, when we craft our Budget we have to craft it in such a manner that persons who are affected and especially the persons who are struggling to make ends meet they want to know how they are going to get out of the situation they are presently in. But, Mr. Speaker, we in this Honourable House from time to time find ourselves bickering on stuff that really does not matter you know.

I as the Honourable Members would know, I shadow as I said you know the Agriculture Ministry and I looked at the result indicators and I noticed, Mr. Speaker, that quite a number of them in terms of the objectives were not achieved. When you look at the reason sometimes no funds available or when you look at the percentage of implementation it is far below expectations and so on. It is this area that would affect the lives of our people when we fail to do what we set out to do, because Mr. Speaker, when you look you know at the objectives in this Estimate very attractive: I am going to do this and I am going to do that. Lo and behold the next time when we look at what was done the comments we realised boy even though this thing was a good idea in terms of what is being done sometimes I said nothing was done or sometimes you have a very low percentage in terms of what was being done.

Mr. Speaker, the Banana Service Unit is very important in terms of our thrust to do better in this very important sector, and we noticed that the objectives are similar to the last Estimates. I noticed that some of them the reason why they are similar is because some things were not done especially with the cut back, the operation cut back and plant back and so, some have to be referred to this year to this Estimate. But Mr. Speaker, I personally was expecting to see in the Estimates some maybe as I said to the Honourable Member comes on the floor whether in the Budget or the Estimates debate he would shed some light, because I know he likes to do that; on what is being done not just to banana farmers but to the other stakeholders in the sector, what is being done to motivate them. I saw incentives yes but that is for bananas but what is being done to motivate say people in the ground provision, in the vegetables and so on?

I have said here in the past that we need to look at agriculture in a businesslike approach because it is a very important sector and it is not one where we realise we can compete with the big boys in Central America but we could craft our industry in such a manner that we can make a lot of money. For example, a former Member of this House the Honourable Calder Williams who is a banana farmer and recently someone ... before I get into that he was telling me that he is not in the exporting anymore because he realised that he is doing very well at the local market, in the Chateaubelair area in terms of selling his ripe bananas and selling green bananas too, he is doing very well.

As a matter of fact he said he is doing much better than when he was selling to the latter part for export and he was telling me how he was able to do that. And I am very sure that in other areas there are stories like that but while we are on that, Mr. Speaker, we have to give as I said give the farmers support in terms of especially where you have a lot of people stealing their stuff and blatant vandalizing it. And as I was on the past M.P. Honourable Mr. Calder Williams just last week somebody went into his banana field and chopped down 175 bunches of his bananas. Wicked people! [Interjection] yes! Very wicked people and I felt it for the brother when I went there and he was like next to tears. He said, "This is my breadfruit, this is where I pay my bills and this is what people came and did". I know the police at Chateaubelair are investigating it and I do hope that the persons who would have committed that coward act would be brought to justice.

But Mr. Speaker, I want to say a more robust policing in a lot of farming areas where people farm because a lot of people who just sit down and wait until reaping time and just want to go and take your animal and cut down your fruits, dig up your provision and so on as if they are the ones who plant them. And we need to have more robust policing of farm areas where these things are prevalent and especially people who also buy from these

persons. I know there are laws to deal with that but we have to deal with it seriously if we want to give the farming community some assurance that we are serious when it comes to their welfare. [Interjection]

Mr. Speaker, I promised that I would not be very long because my Honourable colleagues would have done a marvellous job on these Estimates. I want to say however that I am hoping – I know the Minister of Transport like he left but if he is listening I would have talked about in the parliament here through question that is about the area in Troumaca and I hope that there is something in the Estimates to deal with these what I would call [laughs] eh! The right name is the English Gutter and the German Gutter in Troumaca. But what we are experiencing now in Troumaca is somehow or the other it is as if they are beginning to erode their banks at a faster pace.

Just a few weeks ago a person was building a house on some land and the gutter like it came alive, and what happened is like half the person's house went down in the bank. And this is something that is serious and I know persons from BRAGSA would have gone there and look at it, but some urgent attention is necessary because the way it is it means that other persons property are in danger and it is something that must be tackled sooner rather than later. So I do hope that in the Estimates for Transport and Works or even Forestry or wherever because you know sometimes as the Minister would have alluded to monies are available in different Ministries for doing these things. So I do hope something is in the Estimates to deal with these issues, these two gutters especially one in an area of Troumaca you call Back Piece an English Gutter which is the one causing the most fear among the residence of Troumaca. It is something I believe must be tackled as I said rather sooner than later.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy that after many questions asked in the parliament in terms of roads in North Leeward I saw some work is being done in the Sharpes Village Road in Chateaubelair which is long overdue but it is happening now for Christmas and persons in the area will get better roads to drive on. The Minister did said that they have some money to spend on it and I thank him for delivering on his promise, never mind he did so about two years after but that is good [laughs]. I also want to highlight again the problem in Spring Village and I thought that that would have been a problem tackled as well but maybe the monies might have been run out in terms of getting that road in Spring Village from the gap at the main road right up to Gordon. It is in a terrible condition and I really thought that the persons in Spring Village would have gotten that road fixed for Christmas after they have endured so much hardship on the road. The vans refusing to go up in Spring they have to land them out at the crossroad and they have to tote their boxes and thing up to Gordon or they have to pay an extra \$5.00 and these days a little extra money in your pocket, you do not want that to happen, you do not want to spend it because the roads are bad. And that is why I said when the BNTF programme opened the refurbished Spring Village Methodist School, I said that at the ceremony, which is the only activity that I have ever been invited to, maybe the Minister has something to do with that the BNTF programme when they opened the Spring Village refurbished School, the only thing in North Leeward that I have been invited to in my capacity of MP (Member of Parliament). So, Mr. Minister if you had anything to do with it I will say well that is good.

When they had the opening for that building, the reopening that is, I noted that I said you know, maybe the BNTF programme because of such a nice building in the name of the Spring Village Methodist School, to get to the School the road is so terrible that you might have turned off and go back home. So, Mr. Minister I am

hoping that BNTF because I heard that they have funds for roads and so on would take into consideration to enhance that nice building to add some ambience to it and if you want to call it that the road from the main road to that building at least so that area be fixed and beyond. That is something that I think is necessary because it is a good building and you would need to have proper roads leading to good projects in that area in that regard. So, Mr. Minister I know that I am putting the ball in your court and I am looking forward to hear you saying something that would make me feel good in the New Year, so I am waiting.

Mr. Speaker, the North Union constituency over the years the people of the constituency have felt a kind of neglect and you cannot blame them for that you know, because sometimes things are happening in other areas and they seemed to be left out. Right now I saw people who would have left the Community College; I saw them on the day sometime. I started to do a little exercise based on advice from my former Doctor over there - do a little exercise, so I am doing that. So on mornings when I leave to walk on the road I noticed that the young people some of them whom I have said have finished Community College at this time are engaged in working on the road and so on, you know. I said to one of them and we were having a conversation and he said to me, "You know sometimes, I get frustrated man you know". So I said to them, "You know don't give up hope man better days are coming with a New Democratic Party administration in office things will get better". [Knocking on desk] [Laughter] And what I have said here in terms of our ability to manage things [interjection] it is clear as crystal

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Dream on.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: that when it comes to economic [interjection] management that NDP is way ahead in this regard. [Knocking the desk]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Dream on.

HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON: With 20,000 jobs [laughter]

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: Mr. Speaker, you know it sounds so because the kind of economics on that side we are not seeing any of that you do not know how to create one much less two, all you are doing is filling a hole with a hole. So we need to show our class, we like to talk about what we can do what we need to do and I hope that in the Budget presentation we are going to hear from the Prime Minister how he will be improving the economic situation in this country. Every year we are hearing some flowery language and you hearing nothing, let us hope this year will be different.

Mr. Speaker, at this point I think I will ... how much time I have left?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Nine minutes.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: Nine?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Nine minutes.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I thought you said you would talk short.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: Yes. Thank you. I talk short, this talk short [inaudible] thing. Mr. Speaker [laughs] I do hope that in the future and this is one of my concerns that I have and I have to bring it to this parliament. In the future, the elected Member of Parliament for the various constituencies should be showed more respect than what they are getting now from this administration. More respect in the sense that you would approach a particular Ministry and I do not think and I do not think that every little incident you should go to a Minister or call a Minister, I do not think so. I think the public servants are placed in positions and you as an MP talk to them with an issue and they ask you something like, “Why you do not talk to the Minister”? And I do not think that is necessary, I believe that the various Ministries have enough persons in there who could go and do a proper valuation of the situation that you go to them about and make a call in terms of decide whether or not this person or this piece of road or this area if not is important to warrant their attention. I do not think every little thing that they should be telling you go and ask the Minister. I believe the Ministers have much more important things to do like running their Ministries and the persons under their care should be able to do their job rather than having everything go to the Prime Minister, go to the Minister and sometimes we have it in here you know, “Why you don’t come to me”? So what happen to the other people working under you, you know?

So these are some of the things that we as positioned Members of Parliament have to contend with sometimes and on a regular basis and this needs to change because you know, Mr. Speaker, in the next election when the NDP is in office you know we are going to be behaving in a manner that is befitting to the offices of government; where we would be if the ULP wins any seat then will be glad to accommodate the brethren. You know I have some very good friends on the other side [interjection] you know, dream on you know my brother.

So, we have to ... [laughter] I know Senators Browne and Charles we will be still Senators but there would be lending a listening ear. You know we know that and that is the nature of the New Democratic Party, we operate differently. We are a Party that look at the human side, you know, so we expect that governments will at this time now that we are on this side would be more courteous to us you know. So when we get in office the reciprocation process would be much easier.

Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for listening to me. I want to say to the constituents of North Leeward a Merry Christmas; to you Mr. Speaker, and your family Merry Christmas to you. Madam Clerk and your staff Merry Christmas to you, the Members of Government because I know you are going to have a Merry, Merry Christmas; Prime Minister and your family Merry Christmas.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Thank you.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: My colleague ... I mean it you know, so do not sound as if I do not mean it, I mean it [laughs] [laughter]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I did not say you did not mean it you know [inaudible] [laughs]

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: It is how you respond.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: You made sure you looked at me [laughs]

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATHEWS: No! No! I got to turn now to my colleagues. My colleagues I want to say that let us approach this yuletide season with a positive spirit. You know why? Because I know you know within a few days we are going to be bombarded by people from our constituency with all kinds of things that we cannot even help them with. So, let us brace ourselves and pray that we could offer a little words of advice to them, and tell them, just keep the fort because better days are coming. I am much obliged. [Knocking the desk]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Senator, just hold a while, I will have to ask the Honourable Deputy Speaker to take you through your presentation.

[Deputy Speaker, Honourable David Browne occupies the Chair]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: You are coming to talk now when everybody looking at “Days of our Lives”.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Okay [laughs] [inaudible] you still watch “Days of our Lives” [laughs] that is when you are drinking your cocoa tea. [Laughs]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I drink cocoa tea by the wake [laughs] I do not remember [inaudible]

HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE [Deputy Speaker]: Yes, go ahead Honourable Member.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, as described I am here now as the night watchman I am told to make my contribution to the 2013 Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure laid before this Honourable House. Mr. Speaker, we have had a number of interesting presentations for the day predominantly by those of us on this side since only the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister Francis have spoken on the other side and we have heard different but useful approaches and interpretation given to this all important exercise.

Mr. Speaker I am going to say up front that I was quite intrigued by the presentation made by Minister Francis because I think that while today the Honourable Speaker has been somewhat liberal in allowing us to shift a little bit from the straight and narrow path on the Estimates per se, it was an usual accommodation in the sense, and that is my interpretation, at least it allowed us to speak to the public policy matters that is relevant to framing an Estimate and National Budget. I think that too is an important debate and that we heard valuable insight into that debate in Minister Francis’s presentation that requires some reflection and consideration, and I hope I can speak a bit to that, Mr. Speaker.

But let me say straight up front, Mr. Speaker, that this Estimate in my humble opinion is neither inspirational nor aspirational. It does not motivate, definitely it does not, nor does it in any reasonable attempt stimulate the national economy and I will show how, Mr. Speaker, in a real sense we continue to regress in St Vincent and the Grenadines. I am saying that notwithstanding and I go back to Minister Francis important contribution that we have to contend with. Mr. Speaker, Roman numeral (i) has been overworked today by many Members in their presentation and I too have to revisit it. I think the Honourable Senator Lewis did a wonderful job in an analysis up there and so too did Senator Frederick but I want to give one or two little different insights into Roman numeral (i) that I do not think that has been addressed today and to my recollection over the last ten or so years since I have been in the parliament and I am inviting you Mr. Speaker, into this discussion.

I think when Minister Francis brought our attention to the fact that on the Current Revenue side of the Estimates that we have to come to grips with the \$470 million and I am rounding figures there, of Tax Revenue and \$39 million of Non-Tax Revenue a total of \$508/\$509 million. We have to look at that and say this is what we have and this is what we can realistically raise given that give and take we overshoot it from time to time on the tax side of it, and Senator Lewis he alluded to that that a number of years we have gone past that figure, but let us go with what we have here for tonight the \$508 million. Mr. Speaker, if as Minister Francis properly presented before us we want to present an argument that we do not support a deficit Budget, then realistically we are saying that we must cut and contrive and confine ourselves to \$508 million of Current Expenditure, and if we do that we cannot have our cake and eat it because it then begins to negate the argument that we want more of this, more of that and more of the other, we cannot have it both ways. So that is a reasonable context of Minister Francis's argument we have to decide what we want.

It is unfortunate that we are still debating on the Current Expenditure side, Mr. Speaker, whether \$622 million identified here is in fact current or whether we should leave out the Amortization and the Sinking Fund. Quite clearly people lend you money, they want back their money, it is simple as that and you have an obligation to give them back their money within reasonable time, within a schedule that would have been agreed upon and so clearly the Amortization has to be paid. In every given year there has to be a proportion put aside for that so that is current it is now and so too the Sinking Fund but I want, Mr. Speaker, in addressing whether in fact we have this deficit shift a little bit from that and present a different reality or another reality.

When we look at the Wages and Salaries amounts of \$261 million, Pensions and NIS \$49.2; sixty one and forty nine that is one hundred and two hundred that is \$300 million and then we add Other Transfers \$101 million that is \$400 million. My arithmetic is correct Senator Lewis, Honourable Senator Lewis; \$400 million of expenditure is for Wages and Salaries, Pensions and NIS and Other Transfers. Now I asked quite deliberately today of the Honourable Prime Minister how many civil servants we have in St Vincent and the Grenadines and he said on and around 2,000. I am identifying Transfers to be speaking not to civil servants but speaking to public servants the BRAGSA, the Tourism Authority, Community College, Standards Bureau and Company but they are still within the public domain. I do not know what the numbers are it could be another 1,000, it could be another 2,000, so civil servants and public servants probably could be 4,000, and it could be 5,000 I am not very sure.

But think about it this way of the \$622 million of expenditure, current that is \$400 million of it is basically for civil servants and public servants salary: 2,000, 3,000, 4,000 people 5,000 if you want to add that to it. St Vincent has 100,000 mouths to feed think about it that way, it is 100,000 mouths to feed and \$400 million speaks to feeding 2, 3, 4, or 5,000 and maybe you may want to put a multiplier figure to that, every household, every civil servant, every public servant has dependents of 3 or 4 so we can say that is 6,000, 9,000, 15,000 whatever it is it still leaves a large percentage of the populace to be attended to. How are they going to be taken care, of Mr. Speaker, outside of the private sector initiatives it has to be from the Capital Expenditure because this bulk of this Current Expenditure gone to civil servants, Interest Payment is money gone exported to banks, local banks and foreign, Amortization is for people who have loaned us money, Sinking Fund is not going to the bellies of Vincentian mouths that is the reality.

By the way Mr. Speaker that figure for Wages, Pensions and Transfers this year represents: 66% of the Recurrent Expenditure practically the same as it was last year. But interestingly enough, Mr. Speaker, the figure that has declined here in the Current Expenditure side and I am inviting you to follow my discussion carefully is that last year we spent \$76 million for Goods and Services. Now the Goods and Services amount is not confined to civil servants; it is not confined to public servants; it is for all and sundry but really that is the amount to which all of St Vincent has access to. All of St Vincent does not have access to Wages and Salaries; they do not have access to Pension and NIS, they do not have access to all the Transfers but they all have access to the Goods and Services whether by way of going to the hospital for some service going to the police for some service, going to the Education Department for some service, going to whatever other Ministry it is that is what they have access to.

So in a sense the \$71 million is what is left for the other 80,000 Vincentians, 85,000, 90,000 depending upon how many we are alluding to be civil servants or public servants dependencies: a very small amount, Mr. Speaker. And you would notice that it is a decline from 13% of the Current Expenditure to 11% this year. In other words what is available to the rest of the country is getting less and less as what is available to the civil servants is getting more and more. That is an important stat we have to look at you know; we are offering less goods and less service to St Vincent and the Grenadines every year.

Mr. Speaker, it really does not end there, I feel Mr. Speaker that things really went very bad to for us on and around 2008, some of that debate would have to be elaborated upon when we get into the Budget, but for now I want to continue the discussion that Minister Francis raised to the Capital Receipts side and Senator Lewis also, Honourable Senator Lewis before I bring out another important discussion point. Mr. Speaker, we have Grants of \$50 million, External Loans \$54 million, Local Loans \$57 million and Capital Revenue \$15 million a total of \$176 million. How much do we need to run the Capital Expenditure \$176 million that is what we need?

So if in Grants, External Loans, Local Loans and Capital Revenue we have raised or have confidence that we can raise that money, then why are we selling out the family silver under Other Receipts? That is one way to put the argument but we could also put the argument the other way we can say, since we are so confident, so, so confident that we can raise \$113 million, and we know it is a big lie you know because I asked this question deliberately of the Honourable Prime Minister in the last session of parliament when he said we had raised \$14 million. And if I ask him to go on the floor tonight, in fact I am prepared to sit, and for him to take the chair and

show me the \$14 million I think he would be hard pressed because we have never gotten anyway near there. So, I pause to take my seat for the \$14 million to be demonstrated to ... suck teeth - but that is all right.

Let me go back to you Mr. Speaker, if we are so confident that we can raise the \$113 million of Other Receipts then what is our Capital Expenditure? Our Capital Expenditure is \$176 million because we have \$113 million, we have \$50 million by way of Grant that is \$163 million and we need another \$13 million so we can raise local loans of \$13 million, we do not need to get a local loan of \$57 million and certainly we do not need an external loan of \$54 million if we are going forward. If any financial advisor in the private sector had presented this to the Board of Directors they would be fired, fired for recklessness and irresponsibility.

So, you could only get away with these kinds of arithmetic and financial arguments, Mr. Speaker, because it is government and you see that in the special context and background against which Minister Francis argument and debate has relevance because he set it up nicely, very, very nicely by indicating that this is a balance sheet approach that has been accepted for parliament in St Vincent and the Grenadines and other places. But this kind of balance sheet approach you know would not suffice in private sector. Am I right as an Accountant Minister, Minister? It would not balance [interjection] because it does not show and tell the whole picture.

It does not tell the whole story, because to begin with if we go back up to the Current Expenditure which says it is about \$400 million we need for Wages, Pensions and Transfers we need about \$25 million a month to take care of our salary bill coming from the tax revenue which we do not guarantee that is how the money would flow because we have ebbs and flows, peaks and troughs in government's flows. So what do we do? We hedge our bets by issuing something called Treasury Bills but do we see under Current Revenue any responsibility on the Balance Sheet as a consequence of Treasury Bills? It does not show up here but if you go through your debt you would see a nice little figure at the end of the 31st for \$75 million – page 633, Debt Instrument you would see there in Debt Instrument on page 633, \$75 million of Treasury Bills because that is how we are able to pay the salary and wages when the month comes.

So government is pretty much behaving the same way as a shopkeeper who is going to trust his goods at this shop and next month he goes to the next shop, and the month after the other shop and the other shop, and the other shop until the all find out the story but only governments can do that. So, when Minister Francis argues and I am being very careful, very, very careful because I am going to go full cycle with the discussion on whether or not we should continue a deficit or whether deficit Budgets have a place, you cannot fly off the cuff and say good thing bad thing. [Inaudible] because I can understand the need for deficit financing from time to time because all of us as a people go through that where our monthly earnings our salaries may not be able to take care of all that we have. And so we may go for a short term loan at the bank, you may ask a family friend, you may ask an institution to bail us out for that given time but we also have the same reality that we cannot do that month after month, year after year there has to come a time when we cannot go to the bank and continue to borrow and borrow and live beyond our means.

But what Minister Francis is saying is that when your name is government you can live indefinitely beyond your means that is what the argument is saying and that is the argument of the Prime Minister that if you run a deficit Budget for the next four or five years it is not a bad thing. Well he may be politically correct, he may be

politically correct because there are countries like St Kitts that have borrowed up to their throat Debt to GDP ratio sky high and they are winning fifth, sixth and seventh terms of government in terms of office but they have already mortgaged generations unborn. You know the reality of it is that those same governments you know end up getting debt forgiveness but they still had five, six or seven terms, the same game is playing itself out here in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

So we in the New Democratic Party have to be very clear, very, very clear in the political economy of this debate or the political economics of this debate as to whether we want to be in government and solve the problems there or whether we want to remain in indefinitely in Opposition to identify the solution. So all of us can in fact play the game. The language of the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister Francis thus far on the other side have been very, very careful, they have gone to great lengths to avoid the use of the term austerity. In fact, the Prime Minister has substituted it with prudence but that is what he means: you cannot have all that you wanted before; you cannot have all that you need; you have to make some sacrifices, there has to be some cut backs.

Interestingly, Senator Lewis presented the other side of the same coin, the notion of running the deficits is one in which the Government has been trying to be all things to all people for some time now; have been trying to be expansionary but there comes a time when the expansionary approach catches up with you. And so I come back to my discussion point on why the public policy debate here on the Estimates is important Minister Caesar, Saboto and I know you are coming after me, I suppose I see you are getting notes ready. It is that if we are going to argue and an argument can be made in that direction for some deficit financing we also have to know that it is either short to medium term but certainly we are working ourselves to getting ourselves out of a deficit Budgetary approach it cannot be indefinite.

And in that regards two sets of activities become important, on the Capital Expenditure side it is important that what we are spending there is not only towards job creation for the non-civil servants and the non-public servants because this is where the rest of the society gets taken care of, Mr. Speaker. It is important that in our Capital Expenditure we are heavily skewed towards the economic affairs section but in a sustainable way that is the investments that we are making are not just for today but for a long, long time. Such that the returns and the benefits come back full circle into the Current Revenue side either by way of new cooperative entities for example that will contribute to new cooperative taxes that sends up the tax revenue, and therefore allow us to do more current accounting or it comes back by way of more people forming employment contributing taxes, so that this side of the equation is strengthened. That is crucial, very, very crucial more VAT of course. So, if you are not seeing that kind of investment on the Capital Expenditure side then you have to raise a flag and that is why I am raising a flag, Mr. Speaker, because the position of the New Democratic Party is that three things are critical to our society at this time and requires the support of these Estimates.

1. We have to arrest the decline in the growth of the economy.

We have had three definite years of negative growth. I argued last Budget that there is four the Prime Minister would stand up and say there is no four there is 0.4% growth it is neither here or there, the cake has been getting smaller we cannot debate that. The cake has been getting smaller. You know, the Member of Parliament for

North Leeward made an observation tonight and I share that same observation with him you know. I drove through Calder Ridge back out into Stubbs last week and I watched the gangs on the road and when I looked at some of the young women who have to exchange pen and paper being able to sit in front of a computer for the rake, the hoe, the fork and the cutlass only to save their pride and to maintain their dignity, I felt pained. Because that could not be the Education Revolution that the only job that they could be churning out is for people to be getting jobs on the road gang. I know we would always need road gangs, I know how important it is, I know the elderly benefit from it

THE HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER: Come on.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: I am saying it is true a lot of young people and women are on the road gang and have to swallow their pride and take what they can get. I am saying that it is a good thing that they have no false pride but it cannot be the objective of the Education Revolution. We have to have a kind of growth that provides sustainable jobs in this country and we have the experiences for it you know. We spend \$56 million; something I supported and understood on the development of playing fields \$56 million Mr. Speaker. When did we have the World Cricket can you help me Mr. Speaker? Ten years ago Nature? Ten years after, for \$56 million on sporting development we do not have 56 jobs and you know that I am not telling lies. So, it almost cost \$1 million if we had 56 of them, nearly \$1 million to create a job on the sports field. It should be now that that \$56 million should be working for us quite apart from the feel good thing that we get from our nation we should be having other benefits for it.

We spend \$35 million on a Fishing Plant in Owia that is where it is? We do not have 35 people working out there. In fact nobody, the truth be told those places are costing us in electricity bills, watchmen, security guard, maintenance some place rusting down that is nearly \$100 million just right there, no sustainability about it. So, growth is critical and you cannot have it both ways. You cannot say that for four years your economy has not been growing and come here and pretend to us and argue to us that there is progress. In fact, there is an admission that this Budget this year, these Estimates would create 26 jobs: new posts in the Estimates – 26 new posts and we are churning 2,400 people from the Community College and our secondary schools every year what do you want them to have to get these 26 jobs a raffle? [Interjection] I am saying that we said that we will create 26 new jobs [interjection] and my argument is that we are turning out 2,400 students every year how they must do is it a lotto of who gets the job or who is closer to who? Our society has to do better than this.

THE HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER: I do not know what next [inaudible]

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: So the second point I am making besides having growth in the economy

2. We have to have an Estimate before us that speaks critically to job creation.

And if you go through with the details of these Estimates, Mr. Speaker, of the \$176 million proposed on the Capital Expenditure side because we said only \$26 is going to come from the Current side you know in the Public Service that is what we just agreed. We have to look very hard not for jobs because jobs will be created

but for sustainable jobs, for sustainable jobs. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, the third factor that we want to accompany a growth path and job creation:

3. Is to have an Estimate and a Budget that genuinely stimulates the economy.

These are not new debates, those of us who listen to it over television hear it going on in Europe, we hear it going on in the United States of America, and we hear of various approaches to address those issues but what is here, Mr. Speaker, over last year that speaks to the notion of stimulating an economy? Mr. Speaker, I went to the 2008 Budget, in the 2008 Budget and the Estimates there was a figure of \$449 let us call it \$450 million for Current Revenue: \$450 million for Revenue in a population of 100,000 how much is that? That works out to \$4,500 per a person in revenue that is what it is if you spread that revenue over the \$100,000 that is what it is. In 2012 going for 2013 it is \$5,080 per person in revenue. In short each Vincentian by straight arithmetic is contributing more to the revenue base between 2008 and 2009 but you know what they are getting in exchange for it? In 2008 they were getting \$93 million for Goods and Services; in 2013 they are getting \$71million worth of Goods and Services. The harder they work the more they contribute to the Government is the less Goods and Services they get available to them.

THE HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER: Come on.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Less ... do not tell me no come on you know, I bought pressure tablets for my mother yesterday; at 90 years old she was down at the hospital, I bought her pressure tablets, I --- bought --- her --- pressure --- tablets --- for --- her --- yesterday after taking her to the hospital: they are getting less service for more money!

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Demagoguery.

THE HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER: That is how [inaudible]

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: You can call it demagoguery. The roads that we are driving in this country are the worst since conquest and settlement.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Buildings are falling apart.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Buildings are falling apart including government buildings, many of them look shabby even the stairs coming up here [interjection]. It takes the Government five days to move a dead dog off the road in this country. Five days to move a dead dog off the road in this country! I witnessed those things. [Interjection] I went to the complex, I went at the Financial Complex on Saturday, and I saw grass growing between the tiles in the administrative center it speaks to the decreasing quality and standards that we are experiencing here. You do not want to hear, these are facts.

THE HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER: How it becomes facts when you say \$93 million in Goods and Services [inaudible] salary.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Mr. Speaker, [interjection] Mr. Speaker, these Estimates do precious little; do precious little to improving quality of life for people in St Vincent and the Grenadines as I said it is neither inspirational nor is it aspirational. They are struggling to keep hope alive and thank God for the faith based organisations in this country that they have been able to keep body and soul together. Our experiences would have been far worst in this country of ours. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, next month when we proceed to the Budget exercise proper I will make a different presentation in this House to that which I have made for the last ten years or so because as one calypsonian has said, “It is really too much a long talk”; “Too much a long talk”.

We have to find ways to resolve some of these problems by their own admission in the 2013, 2014 and 2015 projections we are not going to come out of the deficit anytime soon. But we cannot live there indefinitely and we have to find mechanisms and modalities Mr. Speaker that will improve our economic performance such that this picture before us will change. And I will make presentations to that, Mr. Speaker, because as bad as it is here Mr. Speaker, with Wages, Pensions and NIS contributing 66% of the Current Expenditure, unless there are some serious ... and we anticipate that that is what we would have serious stone walling, it can get worse before it gets better because we just agreed that we would pay the 1.5% now and next year 2013 June we will see if we catch our hand to give the other 1.5%. But by that time we would be also well in the middle of new collective bargaining negotiations, I have heard the Honourable Prime Minister spoke to this as he indicated, “Yes there will be bargaining but I cannot say what will be the outcome”. And I could understand that but the question is if you have rise in cost of living how long can the civil servants and the public servants hold their hands to an increases of cost of living in the society? And to what extent the Government would have any elbow room to function outside of the advice of the IMF and other bodies to reward or award wages and salaries increases?

And we have been postponing the Pension Fund debate and the NIS contribution debate, so that is not outside of our reality that rather than 66% of Wages and Salaries, Pension and NIS we could be heading for a 70% of the Current Expenditure if government is unable to get the public servants and civil servants to stay their hands, or we can find some creative ways to buy time in that regard. So Mr. Speaker, we do have very serious challenges on our hand, much of it as a consequence of our misread of the economy.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak to the questions of solutions that has been raised as against just problems identification and I want to speak to them in the context of the constituency of Central Kingstown because things are extremely hard, difficult, rough, tough and people are suffering. I asked last parliament you know quite deliberately what is the level of unemployment in this country and the Prime Minister looked me straight in my face and said 1.5 to 2, no sorry 15-20%. How could it be going down when the economy is shrinking it must have to go up. The IMF themselves said it is about 30%, I believe really it is closer to 50% and if it is 50% in the city it is probably 75% in the rural areas because so many of our people; so many of our people

THE HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER: You are exaggerating.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Exaggerating? So many of our people are abandoning their plots of land and their banana fields to put on a cap and a uniform to work as glorified watchmen and security guards in the town. That is what is happening.

HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE [Deputy Speaker]: Honourable Member, you have eight minutes.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Eight minutes is lovely for me, Mr. Speaker, thank you for your generosity.

THE HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER: They are abandoning the land and turning to [inaudible]

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. [Interjection] Mr. Speaker, I will put it to you that far from the indication and the answer given by the Honourable Prime Minister that 1½ or 2 out of every 10 young men in Sharpes or young women in Sharpes have a job, the reverse is true. It is much closer to 8 or 9 out of every 10 do not have a job and that is not peculiar to Central Kingstown. Senator Charles you know that is the fact for Green Hill. Give me a nod *nah* you can take side with me *fuh* a little bit. Well, I will take that a smile and a pointed finger. You face it, you are besieged and if it is not 8 or 9 out of 10, certain it is not less than 6 or 7. There are just simply too many people who want to work, I know that some people would argue that people could get jobs and they do not want to do it that is another debate and I am not joining that. I am not joining in that debate tonight but I am saying across the society the cry is for jobs! Jobs! Jobs! Work! Work! Work! Work! And our women in particular are the disadvantage set and we must do something for them. I asked last year earlier ...

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: The Government alone provides jobs?

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Your argument about the private sector is valid but I will speak to that in the Budget I cannot deal with it in the Estimates here now, but I am glad for the suggestion because you just jolt my memory and you see you have your value, right here in the House today, Mr. Speaker.

THE HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER: That is sarcasm.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: No! No! That is not sarcasm. [Interjection] Mr. Minister of Foreign Affairs it is usual in the Estimates debate that we get these resolutions which ask for the Government to raise funds at the various banks for their overdrafts and so forth, this year for the first time I am observing a resolution:

“Be it further resolved this Honourable House do authorize the Minister of Finance to raise a bond for a sum not exceeding \$30 million to pay outstanding amounts due to VINLEC and the NIS”

What are you saying government owes NIS? Mr. Prime Minister that is what you are saying? And you owe VINLEC to a tune of \$30 million is that what you are saying? I mean you are normally quick on the draw I did not hear you in your original presentation and I am prepared to give way to your point of order for your clarification. Sit?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Go ahead and speak.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Okay, I thought you ... I want to know what the Government owes VINLEC for? Government has been in the best position with respect to VINLEC and any other government in the life of this country. It is the first government, the first administration that is actually receiving dividends from VINLEC, so while people are crying out for high surcharge, fuel surcharge government getting their dividends you know, they are collecting their money at the Port because some of the monopoly privileges have expired. So they are getting more tax revenue, they getting dividends and they are biting the cherry all around and seemingly here they are not paying VINLEC. Well join the line and wine, so many of us when the month come cannot pay their light bill, some of us get cut off, some of us bawl for murder, some of us cry for mercy and we make allowances but we will hear when you wrap up what you owe VINLEC and NIS \$30 million for.

As a matter of fact, if the truth be told this Balance Sheet here is so short of reality that it does not even take into account the several other statutory corporations that are in dire straits and it goes back to Minister Francis argument too you know, because while we make all these arguments about deficit Budget, it is the same deficit finance that help to contribute to the loss of our National Commercial Bank you know; the master stroke where we had to lose part of our national sovereignty, but that is time for another debate.

I want to see, Mr. Speaker, in the constituency that I have the privilege to represent for the time being until the people decide otherwise and you live with those answers a health clinic coming to Central Kingstown. We have had that debate before, I have had answers to it before but I believe Central Kingstown is such a large populace that the people from Green Hill and Sharpes in Kingstown Park ought not to be lining up and competing with the national queue to get basic health services at the General Hospital. In fact, we are the only constituency without a health clinic of our own because we assumed that the General Hospital belongs to Central ... it does not located as it is in West Kingstown, we need a health clinic in Central Kingstown.

The roads, Minister McKie had agreed with me that attention to the Fenton Belair bypass road would have been a good idea and would have partnered with that I see no provisions in the Estimates for the rehab, restoration of the Fenton Belair Bypass Road. But if we start I am not as good at this I say MP Nature, Stephenson and Patel Mathews but if I start to call roads you will meet me here tomorrow morning, but the road above STARLIFT certainly wants to be redone that Hill. It is the first I see a road that has steps in it that is the road coming down Kingstown Park. It is the first I see a public highway that has steps in it.

HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON: They have one in [inaudible]

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Eh! You have one?

HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON: They have one in [inaudible]

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: That has steps in it. Oh you [laughs]

HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON: No! No! No!

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: ...concrete the steps with it, but this one was not concrete like yours this one was just absence of maintenance coming down the Kingstown Park Hill we need all these roads fix. I get the impression that we have not as yet seen or tasted the hand of the \$2.5 million for road improvement, I suspect Santa will come out a way whether Santa broke or not is besides the point but let Central Kingstown get their piece of the action. [Applause]

HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE: Honourable Member could you please wrap up.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Certainly. One minute?

HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE: One minute.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: I look forward to seeing movements on the repairs, renovation and improvement of the High School, Grammar School in Central Kingstown. The work on the Sharpes playing field; I do not know why we have disappeared off the map with the Resource Center for Central Kingstown, it did not happen this year as has been promised. I envy MP Cummings for the assistance he is bringing to his constituents, with drains and back walls but we certainly want to do something with Largo Height River crossing so I had asked Minister Francis for that earlier this year and I still want to see that link bridge to link Largo Height back over to Green Hill. And we really need some attention badly in Central Kingstown, the City itself look like a person who had been terribly beaten up and bandaged all over, we need a face lift. The restoration to Tokyo, the cleanup of the City all these things have been promised, it is time to deliver, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to take this opportunity like those who have gone before me, by the way I forgot to extend my condolences to Minister Francis and let me do that now. I said so to him privately but I want to say so publicly, and if you allow me just to say so quickly, it is just really a hell of a thing but in the last year or so MP Friday lost a brother, MP Cummings lost a brother, MP Daniel lost a brother, MP Francis lost a brother and yours truly lost a brother. I think those of you who have not lost any your brothers might start disowning you just now because it looks like to be a Member of Parliament [laughs] your brother you might have to disclaim. I know you lost a brother a year or two ago Senator Lewis but we are becoming like an endangered species you know.

I just want to extend my Christmas greetings to you, Mr. Speaker, Madam Clerk, Sergeant of Arms, all your staff, all Members of parliament and quite naturally to the dear and wonderful people of Central Kingstown who I love so much and would continue to give the best of representation so long as the good Lord gives me health and strength. Much obliged, Mr. Speaker. [Applause]

HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE [Deputy Speaker]: Thank you.

HONOURABLE HENDRICK ALEXANDER: [Speaker of the House resumed the Chairmanship]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Further debate? Honourable Prime Minister, no further debate.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to thank all Honourable Members for their contributions and I look forward very much to the Budget Debate come January for an expansion on several of the issues raised in this debate. Mr. Speaker, as also at the core of the Opposition's presentation is confusion, inconsistency, a distortion of facts and an invention of others. The Opposition wants the Government to have a surplus on the Current Account, they want a deficit which is much smaller at least but their argument is for a surplus; yet they are the same ones who claim that the Budget is an austere Budget how it could be austere when it runs a deficit on the Current Account.

In any event the Leader of the Opposition said last year said, "What is wrong with austerity, give us austerity? [Interjection] I know he said that because I challenged him on it, I challenged him on it last year and then at the same time you want to have a surplus but when you listen to the spending request from all the Members of the Opposition if you add them up they would be excess of another \$100-\$150 million. So, is this responsibility? Is this a serious set of people, Mr. Speaker?"

The Honourable Member who spoke last, the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown, when it was eight minutes to go he said I just do not want to describe the problem, I would talk about solution within the context of Central Kingstown. What are the solutions a wish list. Give me a health clinic, fix up Little Tokyo, do the roads that is not a solution that is a wish list for expenditure additional expenditure. So, please if you are coming to offer the people some alternative offer it, not confusion, not a set of words which amount to a deception. For instance, how could it be said that the only thing you get from the Government is money for ... is a certain number for materials and supplies, so what about the goods and supplies? What about the police? What about the teachers eh? What about the nurses, the doctors? I mean let ... unless people want to be taken as a complete joke you know, let us speak seriously.

Mr. Speaker, I have listened very carefully to the Opposition and I have not found one single idea, not one single suggestion to improve St Vincent and the Grenadines. I got a lot of complaining sessions from them as though they have their feet firmly planted in the sky. There is something called a global depression which has continued since September 2008 to the present time, I am not just talking about Greece reeling but the United Kingdom, France, Spain, Italy and we see the challenges in the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, over the last four and a half years despite all the challenges of the international economy 13% of GDP in relation to the natural disasters: the drought, Hurricane Tomas and the April floods in 2011 and 16% of GDP lost in respect of BAICO and CLICO. These are real things in the context of an economy which is small, which is opened and which is vulnerable. What are the instruments traditionally available to a government as seen by Economics Simplicita the fiscal and the monetary? It is not because we do the monetary regionally that that is a challenge, no I am part of the Monetary Council, I am the longest serving member currently continuously on the Monetary Council and we can get our position taken there. But in the United States of America Ben Bernanke the Head of Federal Reserve, the Governor of the Central Bank of the Bank of England in the United Kingdom can have what is called quantitative easing. If the fiscal is held tight you can do some quantitative easing that is to say increase the money supply of your currency. That is not available to us because our system is predicated on for every EC dollar in circulation you must have a dollar in hard currency being represented.

If you therefore were to increase the circulation of EC dollars there would be fewer US dollars and what you have in effect is an alteration in the real effective exchange rate, the rare amounting to an effective devaluation bringing harder problems on the poor and the nation. Because your currency denominated, your debts denominated in foreign currency you have to have more EC dollars to pay for it, and the only thing which may be compensating in an alteration of the real effective exchange rate would be your goods and services would be cheaper when purchased by EUROS, Pounds, Sterling and the like. But because your base is small you do not have the compensating advantages there. In any case the experience of Jamaica and Guyana would tell you if the theory did not satisfy you that that is not the way to go, so you cannot do quantitative easing.

As regards the fiscal you can do some countercyclical, you can do some stimulus, you can do some enterprise but there is a limit to which it can be done:

- a. Because of the unavailability of the extent of the fiscal space.
- b. And in any event the domestic demand is so small that in order to have a big jump in that domestic demand the extent of the stimulus would be so huge that it could destabilize the operation of the entire fiscal apparatus.

So what do you do? You look for a set of developmental instruments and you look for a set of factors and issues outside of the purely fiscal or the purely monetary and what are these? You come to the resilience of the people, you come to their ability to be trained easily and that is why we put so much emphasis on education that you strengthen the facility for their health, as you train them you keep them healthy and you encourage wellness. You have good governance and peacefulness in the country, strengthen citizen security, you make sure that you have fiscal policies for instance in taxation which facilitates investment which we have galore and which we have made easier for both the domestic and the foreign direct investors. And Mr. Speaker, you look for foreign direct investment, you mobilize the instruments the assets of sovereignty and independence to get soft loans and Grants to help you. You liaise with the Diaspora and seek to see if you can get even more remittances, you have a public management systems which is sound and you have quality, visionary leadership which has a clear programme, a clear strategy and a bundle of policies which are directed towards the developmental thrust in all its dimensions.

Mr. Speaker, I am providing here for you a framework for the development which is what we have been doing, you do not get any of this from the Opposition. You get some come here as though they have just found a calculator and could do percentages and giving you a set of numbers without meaning. Others ignore the numbers, some people give you a lot of falsehood like for instance I hear this repeated by the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown that 50% unemployment in this country. Mr. Speaker, you have 105,000 people, 32,000 persons are at school between primary school to postsecondary and university, there may be a little more than that but that is the rough number I give you; 5,000 persons are below 5 years of age, over 5,000 and over 60,000, 7-8-9,000, so you have 32 and 5 equals 37 and 8, 9, you reaching almost 45-50,000.

So you have a labour force of 55,000 the numbers show that at the end the NIS numbers show us employers, employees and self-employed nearly 40,000 persons that is nearly \$8,000 more than in the year 2000. So, if you have let us even put it at the lower end, you have 47,000-48,000 persons who either too old to work, too young

to work or at school, or too sick to work. And you have close to 40,000 on the NIS list and there are other persons who are working who are not on the NIS list: farmers, domestic workers, fisher folks there are about 2000 fisher folks but you only have 30 or so on the NIS list. The minibuses drivers and conductors, there are 1200 minibuses active minibuses on the road.

So, where do we get this number from of 50%, 40% and 30%? Mr. Speaker, I am just calling for us to have the facts and then we can have some analysis. I do not know where on the road work people are having gangs, Mr. Speaker, the gangs are traditional gangs. One of the difficulties that you have in getting gangs, it is very difficult to get young men who have not gone to secondary school and who have dropped out in Form 1 or 2 or thereabouts or men of all types save and except older men to work in gangs on the road. And when I hear they talk about people with secondary education working on the road O'levels and so on bring them and let me see them; it is just utter rubbish. I know what is happening because I have seen the names certainly in my constituency and in fact what people are running you down for persons who may be working elsewhere and some who might be a farmer and want something they tell you to buy their ham they want a job, they do not want gangs. So let us cut out this absolute rot I mean it is unbecoming.

Mr. Speaker, over the last 4½ years despite all the challenges what has this country done? I want to remind individuals in 2009 we paid the public servants a 4%, teachers all of them, we paid them a 4% salary increase. In 2010 we paid them a 5% salary increase, we split it we gave them 3% first in January and then in December we gave them the other 2% backdated. The daily paid workers got the 3% in that year; they are giving them back the other 2% now. In 2011 rather than giving the public servants any increase I gave a 25-27% increase in the payments made to the poor the 6,000 persons on public assistance, now all this is taking place at the time of crisis you know.

We created another group of people up at NIS, Non-Contributory called the Elderly Assistant Benefit there are several hundred of them to go along with the NAP, every single fortnight they would get a \$75, Non Contributory \$150. Those for the public assistance of course you know it is two hundred and something and then \$225. All sorts of payments we increased and all of those payments for workers, public servants came upon a reclassification in 2007 where for example I see policemen here they got an increase at the level of the Constable of 61%. These are not ... these are facts you know, these are not imaginings and in the worst period, Mr. Speaker, in the history of the global economy for an hundred years and in the worst period we are building the largest capital project which would assist in the transformation of this country. [Knocking the desk] largest capital project the Argyle International Airport, the only country in the whole of the Caribbean with Laptops, they call them *Ralph Tops* for 15,000 primary school children took place in that very period. We gave additional and special incentives to the private sector of all types including those in tourism: this is the record in tourism. This is the record of this government.

Mr. Speaker, you know I cannot take the Opposition seriously because I want, Mr. Speaker, to indicate 14 major policies which we have gotten right and they have gotten wrong, so I do not pay any attention to them when they come with their utterances and their highfalutin distortions I have no part of that. They seemed more absorbed in a celebration of themselves on these matters rather than speaking to the truth.

Let us hear what they opposed and what we have instituted:

The Education Revolution which is daily transforming this country and the young people for the better.

The construction of the Rabacca Bridge linking the North East of St Vincent and the rest of the island to bring the indigenous people of this country into the mainstream.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Who opposed that?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: You were opposed to it.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Why would anybody be opposed to that?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: But you were opposed to it because not only were you opposed to it you all pou-poued it and said it could not happen, you had no vision [interjection] I am not making it up. I mentioned the Argyle International Airport already. The Canouan Jet Airport they said no we should not spend the US\$15 million there let the developers do it.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: The NDP, I heard them. The Buccament Resort which we facilitated high quality the NDP protested against it and called it a phantom project. We have as low income housing project in seventeen years the NDP did not build one single house; we have built nearly a thousand, a large scale housing repair programme hundreds of housing lots for distribution and the initiative of turning dead capital into live capital. Poverty reduction programmes which in there aggregate have been responsible for slashing indigents or dirt poor poverty from the NDP period of the 25.7% of the population to 2.9%. They have opposed a whole set of policies you hear what they call it today; they put the words in the least of the apostles the night watchman who came before lunch say we should move from welfarism to development. They try out that thesis with the Member for South Leeward because none of the more respectable ones intellectually want to advance that because people would laugh at them.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: I understand that you are getting a little bit excited.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I am not getting excited.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Well you sound like you are [interjection]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: No.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Yes, you know it is the Honourable Member for South Leeward made his presentation here in this House and he is not here to defend himself and he is no less a Member of this House than any other Member in this House, the Prime Minister included.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Of course he is no less a Member [interjection] no but I am saying that you all gave him some thesis to try out, which those of you who are professionals wouldn't do it you allow somebody else to try it out.

I am giving you my opinion you know.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: If the Honourable Prime Minister will gave way. Mr. Speaker, I am asking him to desist, it is demeaning to refer to the Honourable Member for South Leeward in this way.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: In which way?

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: The way in which you are saying. You are ranking the Members of this House as if some Members in this House have some sort of intellectual superiority over others. The Honourable Member made his contribution in this House and I thought he did a wonderful contribution and I am sure his constituents would think likewise and if you want to take issue with what he says take issue with what he says and you do not have to demean him to do that.

DR THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, I am not demeaning him, I am not demeaning him, I am not demeaning him, I am not demeaning him; he called me today hopeless, he called me today hopeless, [interjection] I am not demeaning him.

Mr. Speaker, they opposed the Medical Complex at Georgetown, they opposed the approach which I have taken on BAICO/CLICO, I noticed every time when I am winding up the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown cannot take the heat and he leaves whether it is now or when I wind up in the debate. Maybe the next time I should do is that when he is speaking I should walk out and do not listen to him at all, yes I may do that yes. Mr. Speaker, they said that we should have a bond of \$190 million, if you have a 10 year bond of a \$190 million for CLICO/BAICO the best rate you will get is 7% when you have done the Amortization over the 10 years, you are talking about a number in the region of \$300 million: \$30 million a year. What do you want to do to choke this country just as how you left it with the Ottley Hall which I had to free this country of? Where I save this country \$180 million?

I have taken the leadership of this government to save LIAT and its insulation from a predatory take over by Alan Stanford to ensure interregional travel. Mr. Speaker, I am interested in airlines, I am interested in air travel to connect, you see this [displaying a miniature model of an airplane] LIAT, part of my dream here with LIAT not only the renewal of the fleet and incidentally we are the first who have paid down our initial \$3.8 million [applause] towards the fleet renewal. This is our money for this year, we have just paid it and we have gotten a letter thanking us - put in an extra account. The second phase would be the expansion with 70-seaters, this one [displaying another model plane] is an Embraer a regional Jet which I am hoping in 18 months time if I have my way that this a 195 Embraer: E195 would land at Argyle International Airport [Knocking the desk] and will take people to Central America and will take them to Fort Lauderdale and to New York City. That is vision [knocking the desk].

Mr. Speaker, this one [displaying another model plane] this is what the Tourism Minister and the Tourism Authority decided to help to advertise the airport as it is coming. This has just come up, you noticed the Logo St Vincent and the Grenadines the Caribbean you are looking for. This is a big Jet, this is not a LIAT one this is a big one. [Knocking the desk]

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: I had one of those when I was a kid.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: You had one of this.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: When I was a kid.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Ah you had one of these like a kid, you see.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Two.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Well, you know when you are a child, [interjection] you spoke like a child and you indulge in childish things [laughter] but I am not there.

Mr. Speaker, the sensible divestment of 51% of the National Commercial Bank thereby easing a public sector debt of \$100 million and the critical strengthening of the financial sector and the single financial space in the OECS; they are still opposing that. The access to the beneficial membership to the Petro Caribe and the ALBA, I heard the Member for West Kingstown said at some public meeting or on a radio programme I cannot remember which one that we are treating Petro Caribe as though it is a milche cow. You see the narrowness, the parochialism, the very chauvinism of their thought rather than wanting to use the assets of sovereignty and independence in the interest of the people. On the basis of Petro Caribe this year we are getting \$30 million for the 40%, \$15 million of which we put towards the airport and the other \$15 million to do a lot of other developmental things which are not in this [displaying the Estimates] because you see, Mr. Speaker, this is a housekeeping exercise but partly also developmental but only partly developmental.

In the year coming we are having VINLEC provide Capital spending of over \$30 million, this year they have done \$15 million, last year they did \$10 or \$12 million, CWSA doing \$5 million, the Housing and Land Development Corporation they are currently now carrying out a programme of \$8.5 million in house building and repairs. [Knocking the desk] And you know, Mr. Speaker, of all that money it is only \$500,000 coming through the Government you know, because I signed a guarantee for them to borrow \$1.5 million and then I have allowed them because they are involved in building houses and there would be a revolving fund, and we have borrowed on very good terms \$7 million worth of materials which is being paid on an ongoing basis by monies from Petro Caribe.

Mr. Speaker, I heard a number of them said well starting with the Honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition whose position was under real threat today because when I heard a couple of persons who would like to assume your position from the way that they have been speaking they impress ... they were not talking to me you know.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Why don't you focus?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: You think the Honourable Senator Lewis

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Why don't you focus?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I am focusing but you are too young in this business to take me off, you too young.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: You are distracting yourself.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Distracting myself, I can play these shots in the middle of the night don't matter which hour you wake me. [Laughter] It does not matter you cannot distract me I am too advanced in this business, and I am at the peak of my game. I can hook you, drive you, square drive you ...

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: You are swiping man.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Swipe! So far, it is pure shots I am playing and you are scampering you do not know what to do with the fieldsmen. But the point about it is this when Senator Lewis came here he came with a surfeit of numbers, he wanted to impress the NDP convention to show that he is the man with fresh legs. The only problem is this, Mr. Speaker, it is like somebody who was just initiated in a subject or goes to the court for the first time, and he over prepared himself and got lost in his numbers. He had no message, he had no central thrust, he was scampering all over the place and when the Honourable Senator Leacock did not know where to put his feet he became blustering and his voice rose. I decided to keep quiet, he sought to get my attention and I ignored him. In fact when I was there closing my eyes and listening I was told that a Member on the other side was trying to take a photograph of me closing my eyes. I do not know if it appeared on Facebook but if it does, Mr. Speaker, that is a matter for you to deal with because I do not know why if I cannot sit down close my eyes and fold my hands, I am not sleeping I am listening, I do not want the Honourable Senator Lewis to look a little too sheepish about this you know. I saw you playing with your phone you see. [Interjection] Eh!

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: [Inaudible]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Not mischief, I saw you playing with your phone.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: You understand your mischief?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: No! No! I do not understand my mischief.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: [Inaudible]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I am speaking about the confusion which you have in your presentation, all of you, everyone of the opposition [interjection] I cannot understand it

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: You cannot blame the opposition if you do not understand.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: whereas ... I cannot understand it?

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: You cannot blame the [inaudible]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Oh please! Do not carry your arrogance that far. I mean you know, you confuse yourself and tell me that I

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: I ask [inaudible] aren't you arrogant?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I used to teach this subject you know.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: Aren't you arrogant

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Eh!

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: to say it was confusing?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: No it is not arrogant to say it was confusing because

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: But I am arrogant to defend myself?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: No! No!

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: Oh!

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Because you see

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: You should speak and I should listen.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: No! No! No! No! No! No!

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: It would never happen that way.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: You see this is where you are confused.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: I am not confused.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker,

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: You are confused.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I laid a proposition that the opposition was confused and confusing and lacking in coherence and I proceeded to demonstrate that. What you did was to give an abdominal attack to say that I did not understand what you are saying that is a different point.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: [Inaudible]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: That is a different point; all I am saying is this

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: Do not abuse your privilege.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I am not abusing my privilege.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: You are more dignified than that.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Is that you did not ... is that you did not.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: Be more dignified, do not abuse your privilege.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: No I am being quite dignified

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: [Inaudible]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I am being quite dignified but I am saying; I am saying

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: Deal with the issues.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I am dealing with the issues, I am dealing with the issues, but you are the one who raised this and said that this is about politics.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: I did not say so.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Ah!

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: I said they were [inaudible] and political.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I understand where you are coming from. Now

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: [Inaudible]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I understand where you are coming from.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Prime Minister.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Yes Mr. Speaker, I am obliged. Mr. Speaker so in addition to what we have in the Estimates here, there are several public enterprises which are doing public sector investments outside of the numbers which we have here. If you have \$176 million for Capital spending and if we get a number \$120/\$130/\$140 depending on how the money flows and there are no bottlenecks and so on, no unforeseen circumstances that would be a hefty number. Because, Mr. Speaker, right at this moment the only country in the Currency Union for 2010 and 2011 which has had more foreign direct investment than St Vincent and the Grenadines is St Kitts and not by much. Last year we did a US\$135 million in foreign direct investment and it continues in this country. The fact that the foreign investors not talking to you about it does not mean it does not happen. I do not know when last how many of you went to Canouan, to Bequia to see what is happening.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: I live there.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Yes, you live in Bequia but it does not mean that you see it [laughter] [interjection] you know. That is humour that is not arrogance; that is humour. [Interjections] well he laughed, he laughed.

Mr. Speaker, I provided a frame. I have heard several things being said about roads. Mr. Speaker we have in the Budget about \$30 million for the Ministry of Works for roads. We have the Honourable Minister pointed out three big pieces of roads, I did too: there is a piece at Murray Village, there is the Leeward Highway from hospital gate right down to Layou, and there is a significant project for the Veggie Highway which goes into Mesopotamia and comes around to the Yambou area. In addition under the Local Government Ministry we have \$3 million for village roads, then you have about \$6 million for BNTF: six point something that is six point something and three that is nine and thirty: thirty nine and BRAGSA is fourteen point something. Mr. Speaker the fact that BRAGSA has a less number than last year is because BRAGSA is dealing with ... because other entities are now making up in having other parts of roads. Still, Mr. Speaker, we need to even do more with roads.

I want to ask persons with their driver licences and who pay and their motor vehicle licences to pay up, there is too high an incidence of non-payment. It is true that what they pay is not a significant amount of money in relation to the cost of these roads. Mr. Speaker, on Sunday 9th the Minister responsible for the Asphalt Company in Trinidad is coming to visit St Vincent in response to a letter which I had written to the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago with a delegation to discuss with us the question of the provision of asphalt, they are leaving on Tuesday. Mr. Speaker, we are looking for new ways where we can get the asphalt, to Trinidad by a special arrangement, out of Venezuela where we have been doing that. And some of the stuff which we are using on the road currently some of it comes from Petro Caribe in Venezuela.

And Mr. Speaker, we have to use particularly in the feeder roads where we do not have the money yet to repair and to rebuild we have to clear the decks and we have to roll the road and we have equipment that we can do this sort of a thing. We have to do a very creative set of road repair programmes and I can Budget what I have but one of the items I am on the hunt for this year would be to see if I could identify some cheap monies to do an additional set of road programmes. They are not inside the Budget because I did not want to put it and I did not have in some realistic way the funding but I am conscious of the road problem.

I hear that all sorts of Honourable Members said that – on the other side, bad Christmas. Mr. Speaker, what do we have happening right now? Apart from all the existing programmes, the preexisting programmes you have \$8.5 million housing programme employing currently 700 persons. We have the road cleaning programme and the road repair programme which is about to start and they would employ together about 4,500 persons. In my constituency alone there are 38/39 gangs they have 10 people, you have 34 of ten persons that is 380/390 persons and then I am having about 50/60 contracts, you are having about that same number of contracts too. Now, you see, I am not making up these numbers you know these are real numbers and I pay attention to all of these details, I do not micromanage but I have to have knowledge about what we are doing.

Then, Mr. Speaker, so that is the housing programme and that is the road programme. Then I have, Mr. Speaker, persons are currently enjoying since the 12th November the duty free barrels, 18,000 barrels at least will come in because that is the number which came in last year. Are those persons from mars or are they from St Vincent and the Grenadines? Then Mr. Speaker, come the 20th or thereabouts the public servants, the teachers, the nurses, the police officers, the daily paid workers among them they will get \$7.5 million in their hand, the pensioners are also getting 1¼% [knocking the desk] Mr. Speaker.

And then on Monday 10th, Tuesday 11th and 12th and Wednesday 1,423 Vincentians under \$30,000 will be receiving, I have the list here 1,423 would be receiving monies from BAICO the first phase of the settlement. You want to tell me [interjections] but you are the ones who said, “What you are doing total failure, nonsense, rubbish, float a \$190 million in bonds” to choke us at \$30 million a year in bonds? [Interjection] And the leader of this drive to this approach to BAICO is the Prime Minister of St Vincent and the Grenadines, and the Chairman of the Insurance Subcommittee of the Monetary Council [interjection] ah! [Interjection] I am declaring a fact like how I would say that of all the persons inside here you are the best batsman ever to have come to parliament, I give you that. [Interjection] I give you that that is a fact. [Laughter] [Interjection] No! But the fact that I stated a fact, and you stated it, it is no difference. [Interjection] No! No! No! I can state a fact because [interjection] no because that has been repeated over and over again. The Honourable Minister Francis has just stated here and I am repeating it.

Mr. Speaker, I want if you permit me Mr. Speaker, to simply debunk the idea by the Honourable Member for South Leeward that this government is not interested in sports. We have spent more money on sports facilities than any government since independence, [knocking desk] and as I would be explaining in the Budget debate and as was done before what is happening with the stadium. Mr. Speaker, I want to say this I took my two ears and heard the Honourable Member for West Kingstown say at a meeting at Sion Hill in February or thereabout in 2007, he looked down late January, early March 2007, he looked down and pointed down at Arnos Vale, he said, “They are building a white elephant down there, which will not be completed in time for the warm up

games, crazy, madness”. That was the position. Mr. Speaker, all I said is this, you see me, I am possessed of faults, I am possessed of limitations but when I reach in doing the work for the people and I have any challenge I say in the same way that the old prophet Eli advised the young man Samuel and said “Speak Lord, your servant Ralph is listening”.

I know this that anyone who takes a place of holiness and violates it [interjection] ah! You are finishing the thing for me because it is written in the book. When you violate the sanctity of a church, when you seek to violate a holy person and you do not ask for forgiveness after you have done the violation the good book says that insanity awaits you. It says all sort of things but that is the bottom line do not go and violate these things.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: “He that knoweth the will and doeth it not would be beaten with many stripes”.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Oh! Oh! Oh! [Interjection] Yes! Yes! Somebody violates a church, and you know that that is public knowledge. Somebody who is high up in politics in the NDP [pulling of chair] ask me the question on that.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Prime Minister, I think that you have more than the ability to deal with everything in this House in wrapping up without being so personal.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: But I have not called a name but you are the one that when I talk about violating any church or anything and you said, “They will be beaten with many stripes”.

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: Within “Lord speak your servant heareth”

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: No! No!

DR. THE HONOURABLE LINTON LEWIS: But I said, “He that knoweth the will and doeth it not will be beaten with many stripes”. It relates to all of us.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Yea! Yea! But I was talking specifically in relation to the violation of a church and you were finishing the story for me and I said thanks. I do not know why you have gone on that subject; mind you are pulled up in your Central Executive Committee you know.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Prime Minister.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Could you wrap up for me please.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I appreciate Mr. Speaker; there are several other issues on which I would like to speak but clearly they would have to wait the Budget. Mr. Speaker, I want ... and

before even the Budget persons will hear me at the convention of the Unity Labour Party on which I would address several matters.

Mr. Speaker, I accordingly beg to move that this Honourable House do adopt the Estimates for the Financial Year ending 31st December, 2013 and be it further resolved that this Honourable House note the projections for the financial year ending 31st December, 2014 and December 31st 2015. I so move.

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: I second as the Motion.

Question put and agreed to

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: We do the Resolution now.

RESOLUTION

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, there is a resolution with two limbs, I shall read it:

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable House do authorise the Minister of Finance to borrow by means of fluctuating overdraft or otherwise from CIBC First Caribbean International Bank or the RBTT Bank Caribbean Limited or the Bank of Nova Scotia, the Bank of St Vincent and the Grenadines Limited, money to an amount not exceeding in the aggregate \$35 million (thirty five million dollars) during the period 1st January, 2013 to 31st December, 2013 for the purpose of meeting the current requirements of the Government.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Honourable house do authorise the Minister of Finance to raise a bond for a sum not exceeding \$30 million (thirty million dollars) to pay outstanding sums due to VINLEC and the NIS.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: I second the Motion.

Question put and agreed to

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the Motion has been moved and seconded, is there any debate on the Motion?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, just by the way of simple explanation. Honourable Members would recall that the overdraft used to be a number roughly twice what the current number is here of \$35 million what we have done in fact is two years ago is to convert some of the overdraft into a loan on which we got a lower interest than an overdraft; and we have decided to try to keep the overdraft

very tight at \$35 million. I understand what the Honourable Minister Francis says but this is part and parcel of the way in which we are seeking to manage the debt situation.

In relation to the second limb, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of payables not simply to VINLEC and the NIS, the sums owed to VINLEC and the NIS is much less than \$30 million but this relates principally to paying outstanding amounts to them. Mr. Speaker, the bulk of the money which we owe to VINLEC is something in the region about \$16 million and it is largely for the street lights. Every year we have about \$6 million to pay for street lights it is a very expensive matter so what we intend to do and a much smaller sum in relation to some outstanding monies for the NIS in terms of retiring contributions. So, the simple idea is to have the Bonds issued, the Notes issued to the entities and we will pay them on a half yearly basis over a period of 10 years while still meeting our current commitments so that the clean up for VINLEC especially its particular accounts. Mr. Speaker, I want to do that too because VINLEC is going to be very much involved with us with the geothermal project which I did not get to speak about and this is a very critical matter.

I also want to see VINLEC proceed with their capital projects without being encumbered because their \$30 million project this year: capital project, Mr. Speaker, mainly it is going to be about \$9 million this year 2013 out of a \$12 million refurbishment of two hydro plants to provide an additional 1.1 mega watt of power to carry it from about 4 mega watts to about 5 mega watts. And then to put in about \$8.9 million in solar to put for government buildings and other facilities another 1000 kilowatts of power by way of photovoltaic systems. Some monies which they are going to have to invest about \$3 million to expand their corporate headquarters, there is an extension for it where they have a property there, things of this sort. So, I want to make sure that everything is in order with them and to ensure that their balance sheet is in good condition. And of course the other relatively small monies which are owed to the NIS to make sure that that also they are taken care of. I do not think that there can be any objection to any of this, it is a matter with both VINLEC and the NIS is quite pleased about.

I am obliged.

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

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move for the approval of this House following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable House do authorize the Minister of Finance to borrow by means of fluctuating overdraft or otherwise from CIBC First Caribbean International Bank or the RBTT Bank Caribbean Limited or the Bank of Nova Scotia, the Bank of St Vincent and the Grenadines Limited, money to an amount not exceeding in the aggregate \$35 million (thirty five million dollars) during the period 1st January, 2013 to 31st December, 2013 for the purpose of meeting the current requirements of the Government.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Honourable house do authorise the Minister of Finance to raise a bond for a sum not exceeding \$30 million (thirty million dollars) to pay outstanding sums due to VINLEC and the NIS.

I so move.

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: I second the Motion.

**Question put and agreed to
Resolution passed**

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, may I be permitted to wish all Honourable Members a Happy New Year and I hope that Honourable Members would find it possible to come at the Residence of the Prime Minister and have a drink with me or if not at my own home in Gorse. It will also help me to show Honourable Members the condition of the Residence. [Interjection] no, well you can see the condition at Gorse which is in a far better condition because I do my ongoing repairs than at ... one of the problems if I may say this Mr. Speaker at the Residence is that they gave it too many roofs when they built it. So you have too many peaks and valleys and there are leaks and they have to do a lot of work there, the doors were made of very cheap materials and several of the doors are falling off. The toilet facilities need to be renovated, I want to use neutral words, and Mr. Speaker if people feel that that is not a priority I will just move out and go to Gorse and it will deteriorate and there will be nothing there. But I have a responsibility to keep it, it is not my house and my house at Gorse is very, very comfortable.

And Mr. Speaker, may I simply say additionally vehicles do get old and at the Residence last year the staff needed another vehicle, I did not release the money to purchase it, I released other monies for other vehicles. I may release it this year, I may not depending on the circumstances but I have to put these things in the Estimates just in case but certainly there has to be some minimum repairs to the dwelling; that is just by the way. Honourable Members can come, they can come, they are all Honourable Members but they are all my Honourable Friends and neighbours.

I want to wish, Mr. Speaker, Madam Clerk and her staff, the Speaker and his family, all Honourable Members and their families the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines and especially the people of North Central Windward. I hope that it might be possible for us to have a game of cricket at the new South Rivers facility, a magnificent facility which has been built. If it is I think it would be right and proper for the best opening batsman [interjection] the best opening batsman in the House [interjection] no! No! No! I would not want that the best opening batsman ought to be on the team captained by the Prime Minister. I would like my side to be quite strong and I would put you on the top of the order [interjection] I want to put you at the top of the order.

Mr. Speaker, I want to give a very special greeting to all the elderly persons, the shut-ins those who are in the Mental Hospital and the Lewis Punnett Home. I am hoping myself to make some visits over the season to many of these places, the Thompson's Home I noticed the activity that they are having at the Thompson's Home this year is at 4:00 o'clock rather than midday, which I think is rather a better time to have a function rather than at midday at Christmas time when people tend to be with their families.

I want to thank, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Maurice Edwards, the Budget Director; I want to thank Mr. Edmond Jackson the Financial, sorry, Mr. Maurice Edwards the Director General of Finance and Planning; Mr. Edmond Jackson, the Budget Director; Laura Anthony Browne, the Director of Planning; and their respective staffs; the Cabinet

Secretary; my Permanent Secretary; all the staff in the Office of the Prime Minister; and all the public servants. I want to thank all those who have been engaged in consultations with us face to face and also on the radio in respect of the preparation for these Estimates and for the Budget debate which will come in January.

I want to wish His Excellency the Governor General and his family all the best and Dame Monica Dacon, the Governor General's Deputy and Mr. Speaker, everyone. I want to give a special greeting to all persons who are oppressed marginalized and in difficult conditions all over the world. And over this season I want to urge all of us and I will urge myself to remember the book of James that we must keep our faith but faith is made perfect and complete through works and we must have that completion through our works over this season and beyond.

I thanked the Members of my security staff who put themselves on the line for me, and may Almighty God continues to bless all of us in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Prime Minister, I know that many of the Members due to the circumstances were not able to express to their various constituents their Christmas Greetings but I know that they have through certain sentiments would have wanted their constituents to know that they wish them very well at this time and the hope for all the best for the season.

I too would like to express my thanks to all the Members of Parliament, the Honourable Prime Minister and his family, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition and his family and all other Members of Parliament and their family, I want to wish you the best as well. And to the staff here at this House the Honourable House, I want to wish you all the best and thank you very much for the manner in which you have cooperated. I know that you have done very well in terms of your responsibility and I trust that you yourself would have a very good Christmas.

To my own family and friends I want to wish you the best for Christmas and all persons who have been involved in one way or the other here in parliament whether officers of the parliament in your capacity of security, in your capacity as reporters, cameramen and persons who are involved in ensuring that the proceedings of parliament go out there to the public I want to thank you very much as well, and wish you all the best and hope to see you in good health and with God's richest blessings next year. Thank you very much.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Honourable House do stand suspended until the 14th March, 2013. I would just say one other thing, Mr. Speaker, [interjections] of January sorry. I would say one other thing, Mr. Speaker, is for us to provide the permission for the inclusion of one Bill on the Order Paper additional to what will be the Appropriation Bill, a Bill concerning a loan from the CARICOM Development Fund which I want to get the approval of the House so that we can have the draw down to buy the various pieces of equipment for the airport. I think if there is no demure so I expect we can amend the Order Paper to include that on a meeting which is suspended.

I therefore beg to move that this Honourable House do stand suspended until Monday January 14th at 4:00 p.m.

**Question put and agreed to
House suspended at 10:16 p.m.**

Until Monday 14th January, 2013
At 4:00 p.m.